The Great Round World

Natural History Stories .. ..

A Series of True Stories

BY

JULIA TRUITT BISHOP

PART II

NEW YORK
WILLIAM BEVERLEY HARISON
3 AND 5 WEST 18TH STREET
1897

CONTENTS PART II.

MARY ANN.

THE REMARKABLE STORY OF A SOMEWHAT REMARKABLE OLD HEN.

I DON'T suppose there ever was another hen that had the same trials that beset the path of Mary Ann. She was the especial pet of Ned and myself, and we were always experimenting with her. During all the six years of her life we permitted her to come off with but one brood of chickens. Her first little ones were five partridges. After that came a brood of ducklings, which Mary Ann

viewed with amazement, and then she brought out a tribe of young guineas.

By that time, I am sure, Mary Ann began to regard herself as a freak and to feel that unexpected varieties of birds were always sure to come from the eggs in her own especial nest.

The little guineas were devoted to Mary Ann, but the time came when she considered their devotion a bore, and set to work to get rid of them. For weeks and weeks she did nothing but try to wean her troublesome children. How she flew and ran, dodged and doubled, and how they went in hot pursuit, and were not to be eluded! Mary Ann tired herself out, and had to sit in the shade and pant for breath; but as for the guineas, they were never tired, and they gathered about her and gave utterance to

cheerful "potracks," as though she had intended the whole performance to please them.

But one day, while Ned and I were out hunting, away down in the river bottom, where the undergrowth was the thickest, we found a wild turkey's nest with five eggs in it. There never was anything so adroitly hidden, but we found it after all, and shouted with delight over our treasure.

"Let's put 'em under Mary Ann!" cried Ned, "and when she hatches 'em she'll think her mind's affected."

Mary Ann had finally succeeded in getting rid of the guineas, and was out in the barn trying to hatch out a white door-knob, which we had given her to keep her encouraged until we could do better; and now this was just what we wanted. We

carried the eggs home in triumph and gave them to her with so much delight that she was evidently filled with curiosity.

Perhaps she thought she was going to have some sure-enough chickens at last.

"Now, look here, my lady," remarked Ned impressively, when Mary Ann had settled back in her place with a cluck and a flirt of her feathers, "these are high-priced eggs, and you've got to attend strictly to business till they're hatched."

Perhaps this was what influenced Mary Ann, but one thing is certain, she paid particular attention to those eggs. And at last her patience was rewarded, for the shells began to break, and there came out of them five soft, downy little creatures, which Mary Ann regarded with a croak of astonishment.

Before the shells were fairly off their backs Ned and I discovered them; and the moment we made our appearance away they skurried, and hid in dark corners of the barn, where we could not find them. In vain we waited, and Mary Ann clucked and called. The wild little woodland spirits would not return until we had gone away.

Full of joy over our new possessions, we busied ourselves building a coop of wire netting that would hold the little turkeys as well as Mary Ann, and then we went at night, surrounded the nest, and captured the whole family. No wild turkey in its native forest was ever wilder than these little creatures, hatched in a barn under the tamest of tame hens. We got them into their coop, however, with their mother,

and we had no doubt that they would soon become accustomed to their surroundings.

Of course we determined to make pets of them. We thought it would be delightful to have a brood of tame-wild turkeys following us about the place as Mary Ann did when she was not engaged in hatching out those chickens of hers, which, to her great astonishment, were never chickens at all.

In a few weeks the little turkeys had grown somewhat familiar with us, and no longer tried to beat themselves to death against the walls of their coop when we appeared. A little while afterward they stood still and ate when we fed them, and within a week they had lost all fear of us, and allowed us to touch them, and even perched upon our hands when we reached in to

pet them. All memory of the forest was gone. They were as tame as Mary Ann.

When they reached that stage we opened the door of their coop and gave the entire family their liberty.

I have never believed that these little creatures regarded Mary Ann as really their mother. For the first few days of their existence they chirped and wailed incessantly for something that they missed, without knowing what it was. Afterward they accepted Mary Ann under protest.

But by the time they had been released from their coop long association with her had taken away every feeling of strangeness. They treated her with a cheerful familiarity that sometimes amounted to impertinence. How many times I have seen two or three of them fly up to her back and calmly settle

themselves there, to be carried about the yard! And when Mary Ann was diligently scratching and had found some particularly nice worm or bug, instead of waiting till she called them to the feast, which she would surely have done, they would snatch it from her very mouth and devour it before she had time to say a word.

And yet, in spite of their bad manners, I am quite sure that Mary Ann thought these the very brightest of all her children.

In a very little time the turkeys were taller than Mary Ann; but she clung to them still, and would not consent to give them up, It was amusing to see her clucking and worrying about the barn-yard, followed by her five long-legged children. There can be no doubt that she was proud of them—proud of their height, their digni-

fied bearing, and the beautiful bronze hues that their plumage was taking on.

One day, while Ned and I were out looking at our pets, the young turkeys began running and playing as fowls will do sometimes, and all at once, with a light flapping of wings, the whole five arose, as gracefully as birds, and away they went into the very tops of the great oak-trees that shaded the yard.

Mary Ann gave a cry of alarm, and then, with her head turned to one side and that mother-eye of hers fixed on her darlings, she called and clucked, and clucked and called, until she was hoarse. Her heart was wrung with anxiety, but her children remained in the trees until they were tired, flying from limb to limb, chasing one another about, and evidently having a good time.

After that, this jaunt to the tree-tops was part of the daily programme. In vain poor Mary Ann scolded and implored and fretted. When she found that none of her arguments amounted to anything she tried to fly to the tree-tops herself, and Ned and I shrieked with laughter to see her big, clumsy body flying a few feet into the air and coming down with a jolt. But after all, when I think of it now, it seems very pathetic—this poor mother, so anxious to keep her children out of danger, and so ready to follow and try to save them.

Time passed on until spring had come again and Mary Ann's brood were almost a year old. They were the pride of the barnyard: fine, big, handsome fellows, with feathers gleaming with brilliant hues when the sun shone on them. Mary Ann claimed

them still. She was not self-assertive about it, but she knew they were her children, and she spent as much time as possible in their society. As for them, they ignored all

the other chickens, but they treated Mary Ann with a pleasant familiarity.

One morning Ned and I were out before the sun rose, watching the fowls, which had just been fed. The turkeys were a little

aloof from the others. We had not been noticing them particularly until we heard, away down in the river bottom, the gobble of a wild turkey, borne sharp and clear on the morning air.

Then we saw, all at once, that the five heads were raised, and in a moment up went the youngsters into the oak-trees. They stood there, with the first slanting sunrays upon them, listening intently. In a minute the call came again, and our pets in the tree-tops sent back a volley of answering calls.

Then, before we could think, the broad wings were spread, and away they went in the direction of the woodland voice that had called them. Mary Ann uttered a cry of fear and dismay, but they continued their flight, and we saw them no more. The children of the forest had gone home. .

As for poor Mary Ann, for days and days she drooped around, quite broken-hearted, looking up into the trees sometimes, as though she expected to see the five turkeys making their pretty silhouette against the sky. She recovered her spirits in time, however, and within a month she was trying again to hatch out the white door-knob.

PATTI.

THEY buried the little singer yesterday. Johnny and Dimps were the pall-bearers, and Agnes sang a little hymn, while I carefully placed the tin box in the grave under the white rose-bush, and then filled the grave and rounded it over. If no tears were shed, certainly we all felt very serious, for we were exceedingly sorry that Patti was dead.

It was not the Patti that sings in the opera, you understand, but a very plain,

ordinary looking mouse. No one ever would have suspected that the queer little mouse's ear was attuned to harmony, and that musical chords were stretched across that tiny throat, but we found out all about it, and that was how we came to name her after the famous singer.

I don't know how long Patti had been in the world before we found her. On the old plantation where we go to spend the summer there is an ancient log-house in the back-yard, a relic of days before the war, when this was the kitchen. The cracks between the logs are covered with boards, and the walls and roof are black with the smoke of old-time fires, when "Aunt Dinah" was the cook for the "big folks" up at the house.

The old kitchen stands empty now, but

I find it useful sometimes when I want to slip away from everybody and spend a few hours in reading or writing. They all laughed at me last summer about making a studio out of the kitchen, but I never regretted it, since it led to my making a valuable discovery.

I was in my favorite place one evening, rocking and reading, and was really very much absorbed, so that it was some time before I discovered that something was singing. I sat still and held my breath, listening eagerly. Such a strange little voice, more like the echo of a song, or like something heard in a dream than like any possible song that could be heard when one was wide awake and in the broad light of day.

It seemed to come from the opposite

wall, as nearly as I could judge, and, scarcely daring to breathe, I tiptoed across the floor. I soon traced the small musician to one of the cracks between the logs, but the board that was nailed over the crack hid it from me. Still the singing went on. It was much like the song of a well-trained canary bird, only infinitely softer and sweeter, with more varied notes and a charm about it impossible to describe. If there were such a thing as a canary that belonged to fairyland I am sure it would sing just that way, with such a small and delicate voice.

What the singer was I could not imagine. Even if it were a bird's voice I knew that no bird could get into that crack between the logs. Full of curiosity and determined to know all about it, I took my station at

the end of the board where there was a little crevice, and watched and waited. The music went on for several minutes. Finally it stopped very suddenly, as though the singer were alarmed at something, and instantly, past the crevice I was watching, whisked a little mouse!

I could have shouted with pure delight. I had read somewhere an account of a singing mouse. I knew that they were so rare as to be almost unknown, and here I had found one. If it had been a gold mine, all my own, I could not have been more overjoyed.

It was two days before I heard the singing again, After that I heard it two or three times a day. I made up my mind that my summer's pleasure was not going to do me any good unless I could catch

that mouse, and so I got one of those little traps made like a squirrel's cage, tore a board from that particular crack, and set the trap in the open space.

The very first night I caught a mouse! But which mouse? Fears possessed me that it might be some common mouse with no talent for music. But I made it a beautiful cage and fed it and petted it, and at the end of a week it sang!

It was the singing mouse.

Its actions while singing were most peculiar. Mounted upon its haunches, like a squirrel, it swayed itself from side to side, and turned its head about, looking as though it were inspired. The sounds were all made in its throat, as it seemed to use its tongue very little, and its throat swelled out like a canary's.

After the discovery of Patti—for of course

we called her Patti—nothing else was attended to for a long time. Patti was some-

what chary of her voice, and would not sing simply because people wanted her to, but when she did condescend to sing, how we all gathered around, and with what delight did we listen to the tiny voice of the fairy musician.

By way of experiment I put Patti in the same room with a fine canary that belonged to one of the guests. The bird trilled and sung its very best, but Patti would have nothing to say while the canary remained in the room. She seemed afraid of her big rival, and so we took the bird away ; but when Patti sang she had the bird's flute notes, which she had not sung before. She sang these over and over, with great satisfaction, and I am confident she had caught them from the canary.

Music had a very strange effect on the

little singer. When I set her cage on the piano and played a piece requiring rapid movement, poor Patti fled distractedly back and forth across the cage and was not to be reconciled. But when I placed the cage at a little distance and played very softly, she gave every evidence of the most intense delight. Her delicate soul was too finely attuned for loud music.

The violin was her especial delight. Sometimes when it was played softly she would leap about the cage in a kind of delirious joy, and on two occasions she fell in a swoon, and it was several minutes before she revived.

When we went back to the city we took Patti with us, and her fame went out among all our acquaintances, but very few of them had an opportunity of hearing for them-

selves what wonderful powers she had. Modest, retiring little soul that she was, she would not sing before strangers. In spite of all our efforts, she absolutely refused to "show off" when we most desired it.

But she learned to love us all, and that was better still. She was the pet and pride of the family for a whole year, this small creature, with the outward form of a mere animal and the throat and brain of Orpheus.

And so, when she refused to eat the other day, there was great alarm, and the place was searched for delicacies to tempt her. But the next morning we found her dead on the floor of the cage, with all the brightness gone from her eyes and all the music from her throat.

Knowing Patti as we did, it was but

natural that Johnny, Dimps, Agnes, and I should bury her under the rose-bush and sing a little hymn over her grave.

A LITTLE

GRAY MOUSE.

THERE had been a rustle among some papers at the bottom of the bureau drawer, and then, when Mrs. King lifted the papers a little, out flashed a little gray something, and away it went under the pile of Baby May's dresses in the corner.

A mouse in the bureau drawer! That would never do! Mrs. King turned over the dresses and then looked under a pile of skirts, and back under the papers again,

when—scramble, jump, squeak—there he was!

Mrs. King had him by the back of the neck and held him up, gently but firmly, his eyes shining and his heart beating so that it shook his whole body.

"Oh, mamma!" cried May, jumping up and down with delight, "what will we do wid him?"

"We must kill him, May," replied Mrs. King, for she hated mice. "He has been gnawing papa's papers, and see what a hole he has made in your pretty blue dress! You are not afraid of him, are you? Here, take him by the back of the neck, and carry him out to the back door, and throw him into that tub of water."

May took the mouse and went away, much to her mother's surprise, for she had

never seen May willing to kill or to hurt any living creature. But she took up her sewing presently, and forgot all about the little girl and her mission.

It was at least half an hour afterward when she heard a step coming along the hall and into the room, and when she looked up there stood May with her hands behind her, and an expression of doubt and trouble on her little face.

"Mamma," said the little girl, solemnly, "do you fink it's right to kill mice?"

"Certainly, May," responded the surprised mamma. "The mice are so troublesome that we have to kill them. Don't you remember how they ruined papa's nice overcoat?"

There was a long silence, and then May went slowly along the hall and out at the

back door. As she went, Mrs. King saw that she was holding in both hands behind her back that little gray mouse.

In about ten minutes the sound of the little feet echoed along the hall again. She stopped in the door, her brown eyes looking big and moist.

"Mamma," she said, with a queer little tremble in her voice, "s'pose you was a little bit of a mouse, an' a dweat, big, old dirl caught you an' fwowed you into a big tub of water—how'd you like dat, you weckon?"

Mamma's face was full of laughter, but she did not laugh. This demure little girl was a continual surprise to her, and she wanted to know what she would do when all her arguments were gone.

"If I were a little mouse," she said,

"and went about spoiling people's clothes and ruining their papers, I should think I ought to be thrown into a tub of water."

The little girl was silent, but still she stood in the door, her eyes growing larger and more moist. Suddenly she asked,

SIX LITTLE ORPHANS

with a tone of triumph, as though she knew that argument could not be resisted:

"But, mamma, dust as like as not he's dot a whole lot o' little baby mice—five or sixteen, maybe—an' how do you weckon they'll feel when he don't come home?"

"But we can't let mice live on account of their babies," said Mrs. King, turning her face the other way, for she was about to break down.

And then May went out, walking fast, as though she understood it was best to get it over with as soon as possible. For a few minutes all was still, and Mrs. King said to herself that May had at last summoned courage to do an unpleasant thing, and that it was best for her.

But at last she heard her step again, and here she came, crying as though her heart would break, and carrying in her arms a queer bundle made of her mamma's old shawl.

"Oh, mamma, mamma!" she cried, between her sobs. "The poor little mouse didn't want to die! He dust swimmed

an' swimmed, an' he wouldn't die! An' oh, if we get him dry an' warm, maybe he'll get well an' go home to his babies!"

And then I wish you could have seen that mamma of May's on the floor unwrapping that little mouse from the very centre of the big shawl, and wiping his poor little shivering body with her own handkerchief. May sat beside her mother, looking on with tranquil delight, and after a while they took the little fellow out to the barn and turned him loose.

How he did scamper away! The little girl laughed and clapped her hands, but afterward, growing more serious, she said:

"Mama, when a poor little mouse don't want to die he oughtn't to be killed, ought he? An' dis one didn't want to die—he didn't at all. He—he likes to live, mamma"

And Baby May never understood why her mamma laughed and cried at the same time as she kissed her.

ABDALLAH.

A SOMEWHAT SENSATIONAL INCIDENT IN HIS BRIEF CAREER.

Y friend and schoolmate, Bob Wilson, had made me promise at commencement that I would visit him during vacation, and in July I found an opportunity to fulfil that promise. I never shall forget the evening I alighted at the station, so dignified and prim in my new suit, and with such a sense of my own importance. I was a little inclined

to be priggish at that time. It is a trouble with a good many boys, but if they have good common sense the priggishness generally disappears after a little. And I really think that this visit took most of the starch out of me, and turned me out a very sensible boy, with no affectation about him.

Bob met me at the station, Bob and a madcap girl of fifteen, his cousin, Bertie. There was a small boy in the family, too, but I didn't care much about him except to wish dimly that he were not in the family, or that he and Bert, as Bob called her, would go off and entertain each other, so that Bob and I could be left alone.

"Oh, Bob, what do you suppose Abdallah'll think of him?" asked Bert as we drove along the country road. "If Abdal-

lah should take a dislike to him you know our fun's all over!"

"And who is Abdallah?" I asked, condescending to overlook the flippant manner in which I was alluded to as "him."

"What! Didn't you ever hear of the Sheik Abdallah?" she cried, arching her black eyebrows.

And then she laughed and wouldn't let Bob tell me who the Sheik Abdallah was, so I pretended not to care.

It was late when we reached the farm—one of the great farms it was, with everything in the world that heart could wish gathered in or around the house. Don, the small boy, was in every place at once during the half-hour that intervened between our arrival and tea-time, and told us how Lena, Bob's pony, was out in the pasture and

wouldn't be caught by anybody but Bob, and how one of the Plymouth Rock chickens had got its head fastened in the fence and was almost dead when they found it, and numerous other details, which appeared insignificant enough to me, just from the city.

And so it happened that this first evening passed without my discovering the identity of Abdallah.

It was early the next morning, though, that my suspense was ended. Bob, who was up and out before me, came rushing into the room that I shared with him, calling cheerily:

"Come, Dallas, get up, quick! I want to introduce you to Abdallah."

I sprang out of bed and was dressed in a few minutes. Hurrying down-stairs and out to the front, Bob hastily led me along the

wall, twitched me around the corner, and there I saw—Abdallah! Shrieks of laughter, mingled with the rattling of wheels and the grunting of some animal, had greeted me before I was within sight; and I discovered at a glance that madcap Bert was furnishing the laughter, that Don's wooden wagon was furnishing the rattling wheels, and that a half-grown pig was responsible for the grunts.

A pair of rough shafts had been fastened to the wagon and a leather strap connected the forward ends. The wagon being at the top of the long slope, Bert seated herself therein, tucking her feet under her, and shouted: "Here, Abdallah! Come along, sir!"

Abdallah pretended not to hear until the command was repeated several times,

Then all at once he came running, in a great hurry, leaped in between the shafts, seized the leather strap in his mouth, and went racing down the slope at a break-neck pace, as intent on his work as any thoroughbred that ever sped around a kite-shaped track.

When he had almost reached the bottom of the slope, and I expected to see pig and wagon run headlong into the fence, he turned deftly to one side, upset the wagon in a bed of leaves, and went to rooting in the soft mould with as much dignity as though he had never played a game in all his life.

Bert picked herself up out of the bed of leaves and came back up the slope, drawing the wagon after her. Her tumbled curls and flushed cheeks made a very pretty

picture, but I was not fond of tomboyish girls.

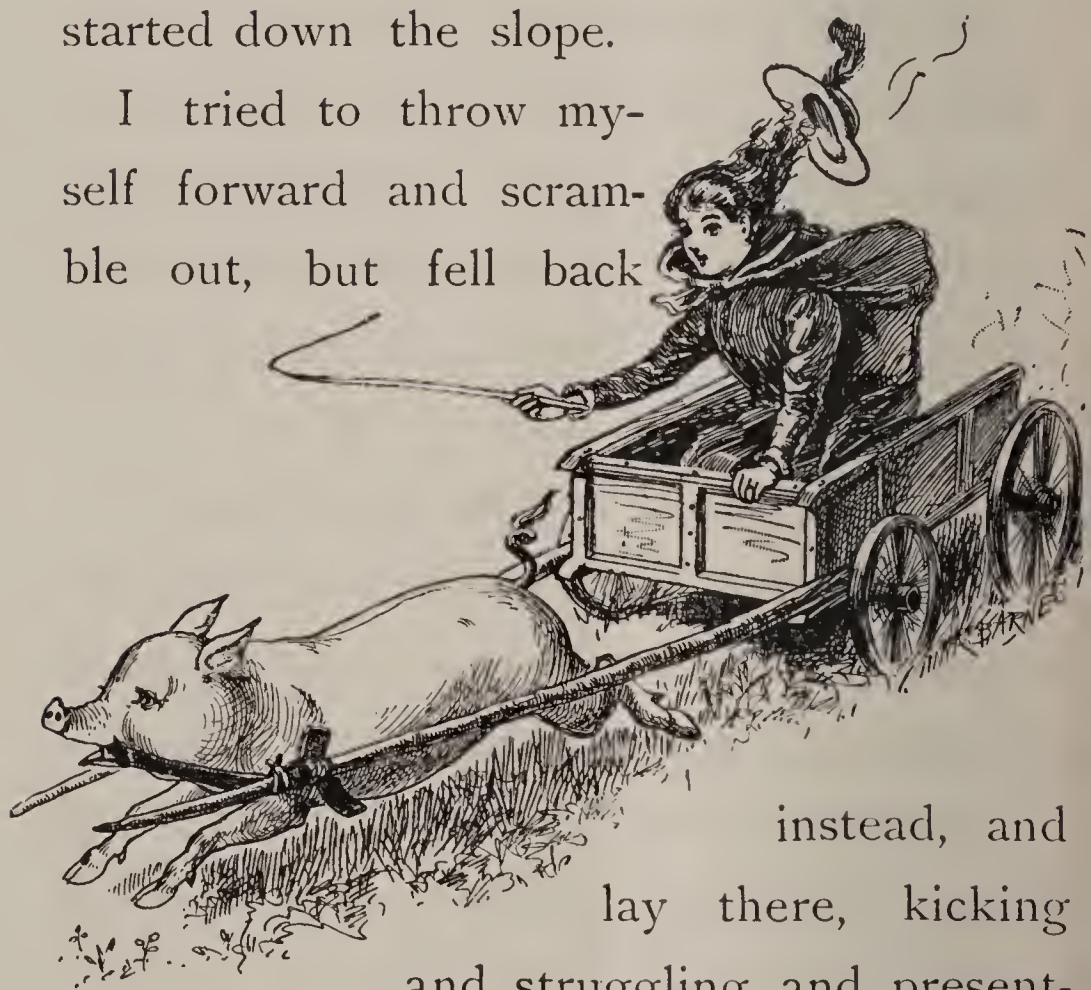
"Wasn't that splendid!" she cried, as she came near. "Abdallah knows just where to spill you every time. Nobody taught him that, either. He seems to have picked it up by himself. Don't you want to ride, Dallas?"

"I am not fond of playing with pigs," I said stiffly; but Bert laughed at me, and Bob said that I would soon regard Abdallah as something more than a mere pig.

While we were talking a little later, I sat down in the wagon, which Bert had left standing near me. My back was toward the shafts, and I was busily relating some college story, in which the Virgil lesson and Professor Means figured, when I saw Bert looking beyond me with a mingled expres-

sion of amusement and dismay. The next instant, with a violent jerk, the wagon started down the slope.

I tried to throw myself forward and scramble out, but fell back



instead, and lay there, kicking and struggling, and presenting a most ludicrous spectacle, I am sure.

Away went the wagon and away I went with it, until finally we were both deposited in the leaves; and when I scrambled

up, there was Abdallah placidly rooting. I am quite sure that he was laughing "in his sleeve," for all at once he gave a loud "woof! woof!" executed a difficult and ungraceful dance, and ran back up the slope.

I did not take the wagon with me, but walked back in an injured frame of mind; and Bob asked, with much concern, if I was hurt. Bert stood there looking at me, the most solemn-looking creature you ever saw; but presently strange little dimples began to come around her mouth, and then the laughter came.

Such peals of laughter! It was infectious. The ridiculous side of the adventure came uppermost, and I laughed, too, and then Bob joined in, and soon the sky cleared.

From that time on Abdallah and I were sworn friends.

The next day our season of summer fun began. We kept it up with unremitting zeal for several weeks—indeed, during the entire time of my stay. If I had really expected that Bob and I were going to enjoy each other's society undisturbed, that idea was quickly dispelled. Bert and Don refused to be left behind, and after them came the Sheik Abdallah. We made quite a procession as we went through the woods on our hunting and fishing excursions, and people that met us seemed much amused, and turned to look after us and laugh.

I resented this very much at first, and secretly wished that Bob and I could go alone; but before the first week was out I had begun to think that the crowd was not complete unless every member of the group was there.

When we went fishing, a particular stream about two miles away was our favorite resort, and we went early in the morning and carried lunch with us, and were never tempted away until the sun was low in the west. Abdallah rooted complacently in the soft mould along the creek-bank, changing his location as we changed ours, and he ate the remnants of our lunch with an expression of great satisfaction. There is reason to believe that Abdallah regarded those days in the woods as red-letter days long to be remembered.

It was the last week of my stay, however, before Abdallah did the thing that immortalized him, and that has made him the hero of this sketch. Bob and I were preparing for an extensive hunt. We had been told that deer were ravaging a pea-field five

miles away, and we determined to start up one of those deer if we could. Bob was very intent on getting ready, and so when Bert begged to go he answered her rather curtly:

"Oh, bother, Bert! Do you think we want a girl trailing after us all the time? There's none but *men* going on this hunt."

"Then *you'll* have to stay at home," said Bert saucily; but afterward, when we went away, I looked back at the gate and felt sorry for her, she looked so lonely.

In the excitement of our long hunt, however, I quite forgot Bert and everything else but the game. We really did kill a deer after two or three hours, and had quite a time getting it out of the pea-field and strapping it on to Bob's horse. It was nearly sunset when we reached home, and Don came flying out to meet us.

"Where's Bert?" asked Bob, before he answered any questions. I think his conscience hurt him a little for the way he had spoken in the morning.

"She's went over to Mrs. Madison's," replied Don, who was systematically incorrect in his language. Mrs. Wilson, coming to the door at that moment. added:

"She was so lonely without you, boys, that I let her go visiting for a while, but it is time she was coming home."

We were both tired and hungry, and we sat down to eat the generous lunch Mrs. Wilson spread for us. This and other things took our minds away from Bert, and it was at least half an hour afterward when Bob suddenly started up, exclaiming remorsefully:

"Why, poor Bertie! I forgot all about

her! I'll take the pony and go after her." He went down the road at a lively gait, but he had not been gone more than twenty minutes when he came dashing back, his face looking pale in the dim light.

"Mamma!" he cried, almost gasping for breath, "Bertie hasn't been at Mrs. Madison's at all! They haven't seen her to-day!"

For one awful minute we stood and looked at one another. Then I caught up my hat and cried:

"Come on, Bob! We'll go and look for her."

But my heart was as heavy as lead. I knew that we had no clew of any kind—that we did not know where to turn. Like one in a dream I ran down to the gate, with Bob beside me.

"We must rouse up the neighbors," Bob

was saying, and his voice sounded strange and far away.

Suddenly I became conscious that something was pulling and shaking at the gate, and then I heard a loud squealing that I might have heard before, if I had not been so preoccupied. Bob opened the gate.

"Come in, Abdallah!" he commanded. "How did you get out, sir?"

But Abdallah, instead of obeying, capered joyously around us for a moment, and then started running down a little path that led off to the right of the main road. Bob was hurrying down the road without paying any attention, when I caught his arm.

"Look at Abdallah, Bob!" I cried. "He has been with Bertie! He must know where she is!"

"That's so!" exclaimed Bob, and in

another minute we were both flying down the little path after Abdallah, whom we found it difficult to keep up with, such excellent use did he make of his short legs.

But he knew just where he was going. He was more than half a mile from home, when he suddenly left the path, ran out among the trees a few steps, and gave a joyous grunt of greeting.

And there we found poor Bert, lying on the ground, dead, apparently, though when we tried to lift her she roused and groaned dismally:

"Oh! my ankle! I can't walk!"

Well, the end of it was that we made a "pack-saddle" of our four hands, and got her on it somehow, and carried her home by easy stages. She fainted away when we laid her on the bed, and the doctor said

it was a very serious sprain, which would keep madcap Bert in bed for several weeks. She was as brave as could be, and bore her pain like a little heroine.

She told us all about it next day.

"I went down the path on purpose," she said. "I like that way best because it is shady, and I knew where there was the jolliest little humming-bird's nest, and I wanted to see if the eggs were hatched yet. I had to climb a little bit to look in, and I slipped and fell. I couldn't get up, my ankle hurt me so. Abdallah stayed by me all the afternoon.

"When it began to get late he came and tried to pull me up. Didn't you find my dress in tatters? I thought so. He did that trying to help me get up. And at last he ran away, and when I thought that I

must stay there all night alone I was frightened, and I believe I came near fainting."

The tears were in Bert's pretty eyes as she talked, and, glancing up suddenly, she found an answering moisture in mine. Smiling whimsically through her tears, she said :

"Come now, Dallas, own up ; isn't Abdallah a pretty good fellow ?"

You may be sure I sung Abdallah's praises, and I think either Bob or I would have been willing to make his pigship a bed in the parlor and let him play on the piano.

My visit ended a few days later. Bob was taking me to the station that morning, and we were driving briskly along that beautiful road, when, happening to glance behind us, we were horrified to behold Abdallah trotting briskly along after us.

It was too late to turn back, so we were forced to make the best of it. We drove up to the station, and Abdallah mounted the platform and made himself at home. The station-agent came along and kicked at the intruder, but Abdallah deftly eluded him, and then avenged himself by running after the agent and playfully nipping his heels.

The train came in, and it chanced to be filled with a party of excursionists come up to attend some local celebration. When I could get into a car at last, and look out of the window, there was Abdallah, monarch of all he surveyed, rubbing against costly dresses and nosing over faultless patent leathers, evidently regarding this little outing as a gala day in his history.

Six months after that, I one day received a note from Bert, saying :

"Your little favorite, the Sheik Abdallah, is dead. We don't know what was the matter with him, but think he had symptoms of gout. We tried to brace him up until your next summer's visit, but he wouldn't be braced."

* * *

I showed that note to my wife the other day, and she, smiling at some quaint memory, said:

"What a little goose I was! Poor Abdallah!"

JEAN'S BROWNIE.

WHICH WAS NOT A BROWNIE AT ALL, BUT A CUNNING LITTLE MOUSE.

ROWNIE was not a Brownie at all, but if he had been I am quite sure he could not have done more for the entertainment of the boy that had devoted so much of his time to him.

The boy's name was Jean Marie Baptiste Claudet, and perhaps it was so large that it had weighed him down. At any rate, he was very delicate, with big, dark eyes and a thin little face that strangers turned to look at, it was so pretty.

Jean lived in New Orleans, in a tall house, which had no yard in front, but which had a square, paved court at the back. That little court was closed in by high walls on every side, so that Jean could see nothing from it but the blue sky and the floating clouds overhead. A flower-bed ran along one side of it, filled with the bright-hued coleus and blazing yellow marigolds; and here and there were great urns, taller than Jean himself, in which grew palms or bananas, waving their huge leaves like banners in every breeze.

There was a beautiful park only two or three blocks away, and sometimes Jean's mother took him there in the evening, but he did not like it. It seemed to make him lonelier. He was afraid of the children, and nothing could persuade him to play

with them. His mother said that it seemed to her he had forgotten how to play, but I think that he had never learned.

He was happier in the little court at home, out of sight of everybody, and there he talked to himself, and had all kinds of queer fancies, every day for hours at a time. Sometimes he ate his lunch there, and that was what led to Brownie's coming, in the first place.

For Brownie was only a little mouse, you understand, with a fondness for crumbs; and instead of waiting, as it generally did, I suppose it was very hungry that day; so it whisked out of a little hole in the wall and seized a crumb and scurried back again, before Jean's very eyes. The eyes grew larger and brighter with delighted astonishment. A mouse! Perhaps it would come back again!

So the crumbs were not swept away, and Jean sat still and waited.

"If I don't move he'll get to thinking I'm one of the urns—a new kind of one," he said to himself. And he looked as much as possible like a new kind of urn, and after a minute or two the mouse came back.

"I'm going to tame him," whispered the lonely little boy, with a new light shining in his eyes.

And with this purpose in view, Jean set to work. It is wonderful what progress you can make in a thing like that, when you make up your mind to it. Jean wasted a good many crumbs in the effort. His mother said he took enough food out there for that mouse, every day, to feed a Newfoundland dog; but he succeeded. He tamed the mouse.

Before the second day was over Brownie would come out and eat his crumbs on the spot, casting an inquiring eye, meanwhile, at the new kind of urn that looked so much like a little boy. At the end of a week Jean's motions made no difference to Brownie, who ate his dinner in placid content, well satisfied that no other mouse since the world began was ever so favored by fortune.

What a day that was, marked with a white stone, when Brownie would sit in Jean's slender hand, and consent to be rubbed with a delicate touch, as though he were too small and slight for ordinary handling! And what a day that was, soon afterward, when a dainty little cage was brought home and Brownie was introduced to it!

"Though you're not to live there unless you like it," Jean explained to him. "But anybody can see that it's lots nicer than a musty, stuffy hole in the wall."

This reasoning must have had its weight with Brownie, or perhaps he had never been on friendly terms with the mouse people on the other side of the wall; but however it might be, after two or three days' hesitation he took possession of his new home, which was left open on the pavement to give him time to decide. There was the loveliest little dark nest in one corner of the cage; and it was quite a nice thing to go to bed comfortably, and then find a delightful breakfast waiting for you outside when you waked, with no odious traps anywhere in sight.

It was painful, perhaps, for Brownie to

choose between his old life and civilization; but having chosen, he gave himself up to civilization unreservedly.

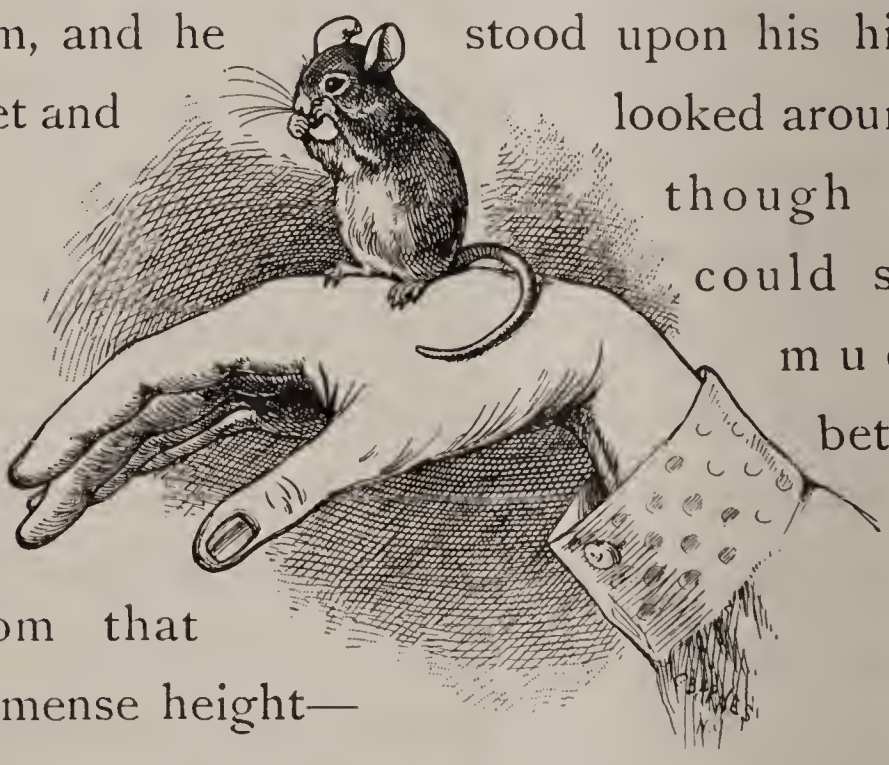
And from that time on, what fun they had, those two! All day long Jean's mother, in the house, could hear the little boy's high, nervous laugh ringing out; and he had laughed so seldom before.

"He amuses himself with that funny mouse," she said; only she said it in French; and she kept as far away as possible from the court, for she was afraid of mice.

There never was so nice and confidential a mouse as that. Jean discovered that he was very fond of bird-seed, and after that a little box of seed was always standing ready for him. And what a sight it was to see him sit erect like a squirrel, with a seed

grasped in those tiny specks of hands, and shell it and eat the kernel with a pert look of delight!

And when any unusual noise startled him, and he stood upon his hind feet and looked around, as though he could see much better from that immense height—



what a picture he was then! Jean's little shrill cackle of laughter kept sounding all day long, and whenever he laughed Brownie rushed at him and ran up his sleeve. Such a tiny piece of flesh and blood as Brownie

was, and yet such a companion as he was to the little boy who had been so lonely.

Why, one day, before Jean knew it, almost, Brownie could play hide and seek. Jean would run here, there, and everywhere, and would dash behind one of the great urns and crouch there, trembling with eagerness; and then, before you could think, here would come a little flash of gray, and Brownie would leap about and whisk that absurd tail of his, as though it were the greatest fun in the world.

And then, all at once, Brownie would disappear, and Jean would search and call until he was tired, and would give it up; and then that merry little joker would dart out from under some leaf and run up that ready sleeve as soon as Jean laughed. I am not sure that Brownie ever laughed

himself, but he had a keen sense of humor, had that mouse; and he played many a merry joke on the little boy with the great name.

One day Jean couldn't find his little companion, though he looked under all the plants and around the urns and into the unfolding banners of the bananas; and his lips were trembling at the thought that Brownie had deserted him, when he chanced to put his hand into his pocket, and there was Brownie, tucked away in the very farthest corner.

And if the world is better and brighter because of a child's innocent laughter, then Brownie surely did a great deal for the world. Even when the time came when Jean was more easily tired, so that he could sit up only a little while at a time, he had

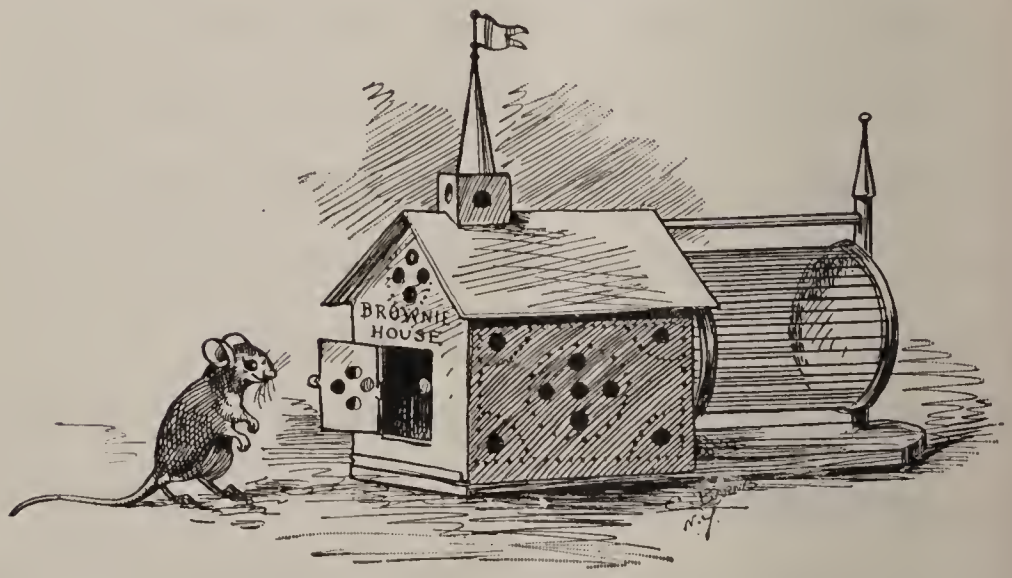
his hammock stretched between two of the high walls, across the little court, and he lay there and played with Brownie.

All day long his laugh echoed, a little fainter now, but as full of fun as ever; and so he and Brownie went playing down to the borders of the Sunny Land, and there they parted company.

One day the "little white hearse went glimmering by" down the long, noisy street. The next morning some of them found Brownie running around the urns and searching for his playmate, who had never hidden from him so well before.

He would let no one touch him, though they tried to pet him for the boy's sake. They filled his boxes with food, but he left it untouched; and a few days later they found him lying cold and still in his little cage.

What a tiny creature he was, stretched out in the hand of one that found him; and yet that had been a merry and alert little brain, and faithful devotion had throbbed in the little heart!



PADDY AND CELESTE.

THE FRIENDSHIP AND VAGARIES OF A MOCKING-BIRD AND A CAT.

WHEN the mocking-bird became a member of the family he was welcomed with the greatest enthusiasm by every one of us. The only doubt that troubled anybody was connected with Celeste.

You see, Celeste was fond of birds, and a vision came before us at that moment of Celeste concentrating her attention upon

the bird for a moment or two, and then gathering it to her warm embrace; after which there would be but one pet in the family. You will not need to be told that Celeste was the cat.

"Now don't be uneasy, children," said our aunt, with grim resolve. "I'm going to teach Celeste to let that bird alone."

When Aunt Susan spoke like that we always looked at her with respectful admiration; because we knew that she would do what she said. We never knew how she did those queer things, but she always did them. So when she took Celeste and the bird into her room, we hurried out to the lawn and spoke in whispers. We were afraid of what she might be doing to Celeste!

For several days in succession Celeste

and the bird were taken to that dreadful room, where Celeste, at least, must have had fearful experiences. Our warmest sympathies were with our unfortunate pet, which must be taught this severe lesson; but we knew that she ought to learn it. And at last one day Aunt Susan leaned out of the window and called out:

"Children! come up here a minute! I have something to show you!"

We went flying, and there were Celeste and the bird down on the floor eating out of the same dish!

We named the bird Paderewski, but Ned insisted on calling him "Paddy," for short, and Paddy he became. And such a merry, jolly, happy-go-lucky fellow as he was! He had a cage, but was never confined in it. The "freedom of the house" was his,

and he roamed from room to room, singing on chair-backs, flirting noisily at his own reflection in the mirror, tiptoeing into the pantry in search of stray crumbs, and stealing from the dining-table whenever he had the slightest opportunity.

And what a companionable creature he was, that Paddy! Nobody ever felt lonely while he was around! He was so jolly and full of fun, such a bundle of wild vagaries, that he would keep one laughing by the hour. That inquisitive bill of his was poked into every imaginable place, and his exclamations of astonishment over anything that he didn't understand were as plain as the choicest English could have made them.

Paddy was renowned among all our friends for his skill as a singer, but there

were two things that always made him sing as though his life depended on it. When any one of the family read aloud, Paddy regarded it as some kind of song, and determined to outsing his rival if it could be done. When the piano was played Paddy went into such ecstasies of wild, delirious mirth as were never heard from any human chorister. How he would sing and dance and swell his tiny throat, and throw himself into the air and fall back again, singing as he fell, until one could hardly tell which were the notes brought forth by the ivory keys, and which poured, fresh and dewy, from that golden throat.

Paddy must have had some whimsical memories connected with Aunt Susan's conquest of the cat; for he treated Celeste with an easy familiarity that was shocking

to her gentle dignity. They ate together day after day, and many a time have I seen Paddy whisk the choicest morsels from under Celeste's very nose, and if she ventured to his side of the plate he never failed to give her a dig on the ear with his bill. Between meals he amused himself with Celeste as though she were some plaything made expressly for his entertainment.

His great delight was to catch Celeste asleep, and to perch on her gray side, and tweak her ears, and pull out little bunches of fur, and peck at the end of her nose until she was forced to rise and shake off her persecutor.

Poor Celeste! After watching all night she was naturally sleepy all day; and when she had driven the bird away and had nodded a few moments she would curl herself

down and fall asleep again. But here would come the gay little Bohemian, digging and tweaking; and when he could not drive his victim up by any other means, he would lay hold of the tip of her tail, brace his little feet, and pull with all his tiny might.

Celeste generally came up with a rush, and sometimes growled threateningly at the little gray-winged joker, but Paddy was never in the least alarmed. Indeed, on one occasion when poor Celeste yawned from utter weariness, Paddy stepped up jauntily, peeped into that cavity between her gaping jaws, uttered his funny little croak of gratified surprise, and then pecked at one of Celeste's long, shining, dangerous teeth!

Mercy! How Celeste did jump and fly to the other side of the room, and stare at that bird! I believe she was fully con-

vinced that if he had half a chance he would pick every tooth out of her head. Never were matters so completely reversed as between this jolly little joker of a bird and the long-toothed cat that was afraid of him.

And yet Paddy's heart was a tender one, beneath all that gaiety, and its friendships were deeper and stronger than we knew. One day we found him in the hall trying to arouse Celeste. She was sleeping on the rug, but when we came to look a little closer we found that it was her last sleep, and that not even Paddy could arouse her any more.

Day after day the bird looked for Celeste from room to room, all about the house, uttering his little cry of displeasure and anxiety. When he became convinced that she was not to be found he began to droop,

and for a month we feared that we should lose him as well as Celeste. He brightened up a little, after a while, but he sang no more that season. He was mourning for Celeste, and could not sing while his loss was fresh upon him.

BEN.

THE STORY OF A PET THAT MADE A FARM-HOUSE PRETTY LIVELY.

"I'D just like to know what it is bothering my chickens," Mrs. May had said, morning after morning, as she came in from counting her brood, having always found one or two missing.

We were spending the summer at the May farmhouse, and having a decided fondness for Mrs. May's fried chicken we were very much interested in the subject. If this wholesale slaughter went on, who

knew whether there would be any fried chicken in another week?

"Maybe it's a mink, mother," said Mr. May, in his slow way. "I guess I'd better git me a steel-trap."

So the steel-trap was borrowed from a neighbor the next day and was set in the fowl-house, with the remains of the unfortunate victim of last night's raid serving as a bait. We had never seen a mink, and we were immensely interested.

We were dressing the next morning when we heard Mr. May shout:

"Oh, boys! come here, quick!"

Away we flew, and there was Mr. May holding up the steel-trap, and laughing in his quaint, slow way, Dangling from the trap was something soft, gray, and furry, something with a long, obtrusive tail, des-

titute of hair, and with the most insinuating grin that ever divided a countenance from ear to ear.

"A 'possum!" was Mr. May's comment. "A mean, ornary 'possum! How do you like his smile, boys?"

"Oh, give him to us!" was the eager chorus that rose around him. "We want him for a pet!"

Everybody on the place knew by this time that we were ready to make a pet of anything that presented itself, so Mr. May unclasped the jaws of the steel-trap and released the poor little foot, which must have been suffering tortures from the pressure. Instantly, to our dismay, our new pet fell to the ground limp and motionless.

"Oh, poor thing! It is dead!" cried Bert, running to smooth down the gray fur.

I went, too, and was about to lift it up when I saw something shining like a jewel through a tiny crack in the closed eyelids. The little fraud was shamming, and Mr. May was laughing at us.

"Didn't you ever hear tell of playing 'possum?" he asked. "Well, now you know all about it."

But we had found the rascal out, now, and when he "came un-dead," as Bert expressed it, he had a little chain fastened about his neck, and instead of running away, as he expected, he could do nothing but promenade around a stake and wish he had never stolen chickens.

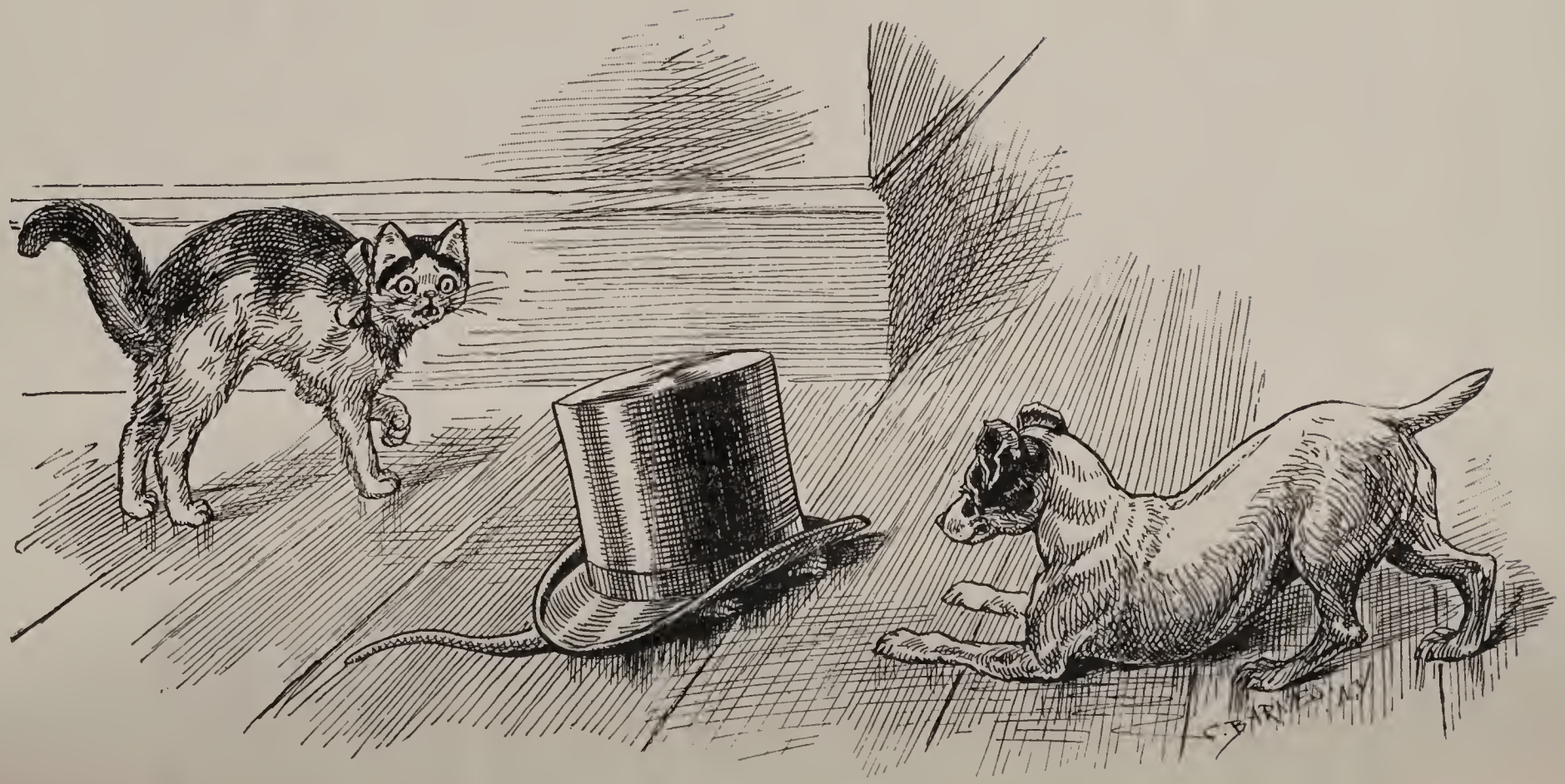
* * *

We had a great time trying to tame Ben—his whole name was Benedict Arnold, on account of his manners, you know, but

Ben was his every-day name. Whenever we came near him he retreated to the end of his chain, and grinned at us and hissed like a whole colony of geese, and when we persisted in touching him he lay down and died, without further delay.

This was certainly a very summary way of getting rid of annoyance, because we were very sympathetic toward Ben, and had great respect for him when he was dead.

But we fed him and cared for him so persistently that at last his suspicious heart was won. Doubtless generations of abuse by mankind, and bitter experiences, filled with memories of hounds and horns and glaring torches, had made him the timid and retiring creature he was. It was delightful to see his nature blossom out and grow warmer under the influence of kind-



ness. Gradually he died less frequently, seeming to die then as a mere matter of habit; and he "came un-dead" without any unnecessary delay.

After a while we were always greeted by that insinuating smile when we went out to visit Ben; and the time came at last when he was given his liberty within certain limits. It is needless to say that those limits did not include the fowl-house, but such as they were Ben enjoyed them to the utmost.

It was amusing to see the lively curiosity with which he investigated everything that came within his reach. He climbed the head-board of the bedstead and hung head downward from the canopy, holding on by that useful tail. He grinned at himself in the mirror with a self-complacent air that

was beautiful to see; and he thrust his inquisitive nose into every box and under every book and paper,

He managed to pull the hat-box with Mr. May's best silk hat out into the middle of the floor; and then he managed to get the hat down over himself like an extinguisher. When we came into the room that day we found a silk hat walking about the floor in the most unaccountable manner, and there was Ben under it, looking as innocent as a baby.

"You rascal!" said Mr. May as he smoothed the nap of his hat; and then he added thoughtfully: "I hope it felt more comfortable on you than it does on me."

* * *

As time passed we found that Ben was brimful of mischief; and that he had a quiet

sense of humor, and doubtless laughed to himself at many of the jokes he played on unsuspecting people. How many times I have seen him drop down from his favorite playground, the joists in the old farm kitchen, snatch something from the table while "Aunt Ilsy's" back was turned, and be up on the joists calmly devouring it before she had detected the theft.

And when she had detected it, and was in hot pursuit of the thief with a broom, he always scrambled to some place beyond her reach and smiled down at her triumphantly, with his cunning head on one side. He had enough to eat, and I have always believed that he stole from "Aunt Ilsy" because he enjoyed the storm that came afterward. It amused him to see the broom waving, and to know that it was just a few inches too

short. We fancied that his smile grew broader on these occasions, and perhaps it really did.

Aunt Ilsy was preparing for church one Sunday, and had laid her beautiful new bonnet on the bed; but when she went to put it on it was not there. Attracted by her loud outcry, we went and joined in the search, troubled with a vague misgiving all the time that Ben was in some way connected with the disappearance of the headgear.

It was some time before we found the culprit. We were running through the yard when we saw something move in the live-oak tree, the tree with the hollow trunk, and there was Ben, running in and out of the hollow, dragging the bonnet after him.

Such a sensation as there was! Amid

Aunt Ilsy's despairing cries some of us climbed the tree and rescued the bonnet, but it was a total wreck, draggled and disreputable-looking. We bought Aunt Ilsy a new bonnet, but from that time on she and Ben were sworn enemies.

* * *

Ben and the dog were never on friendly terms. The dog was a big-hearted creature which would have made friends with a wildcat if we had asked him to; but Ben treated him with a cold and distant formality that showed that he did not care to be intimate.

With the cat, however, it was different. During the months that we had him Ben spent the greater part of his time devising practical jokes upon this unfortunate cat. He would watch for hours until poor Tabby,

off her guard for a moment, would fall asleep under the shade of some bush. Then would Ben creep softly into the bush, let himself down from an overhanging limb, and give a dreadful hiss in the cat's ear. There was a wild howl and a terrific spring that landed the cat yards away; and she was unnerved and growling for the next hour.

As for the joker himself, he swung himself back to his perch and smiled cheerfully, and looked for more worlds to conquer.

Even his death came like a joke to this little humorist. Aunt Ilsy and the broom were in full pursuit of him one day, when he surprised us by dropping down at our feet as lifeless as he always did when he died; but the minutes passed, and he didn't "come un-dead." There was no bright

gleam from between the closed eyelids. The sham death was a real one this time; but the smile was there still; broad, genial, full of quiet humor, as though it amused him to the last to have fled beyond the reach of Aunt Ilsy's broom.

A PET

HUMMING-BIRD.

HOW IT WAS CAPTURED, CAGED, AND MADE TO EAT.

THE very smallest pet that anybody ever had, one would think. And I was not looking for pets especially that day. It was in the fall, while the days were still uncomfortably warm, but the nights were cool enough to set banners of crimson and gold flying in all the trees. The leaves change color in the South long before the frost actually touches them, and just at that time

everything was at its gayest, as though Nature were wearing all the splendor at her command, knowing that the time was very near when she must lay it all aside.

The preceding night had been very cool, and everything was drenched with dew that was almost like ice. I was going about the yard intent on getting a few late roses and sprays of honeysuckle for the breakfast table, when I was startled by something that stirred faintly in the grass at my feet. The next moment I had it in my hand, a poor little humming-bird, dead, as I thought, its feathers drenched with dew and its tiny claws curled up as though it were quite done with the world, and would never again dart airily about, a small, dainty creature fit only for flowers and sunshine.

It would have been quite unlike me, how-

ever, to leave the little thing to its fate. I was almost certain that it would like to live, and I took it in to try the effect of warmth on its little chilled frame. I laid it on a table where the sun would shine straight upon it.

As I sat there, watching the motionless little body, I began all at once to be impressed with the exceeding smallness of it. Think of it! If those shining green feathers were stripped off, the body would be but the merest atom. And then, how tiny must be the heart in that little breast! How like mere threads must be the largest of the arteries! Fancy seeing the bones of one of those airy wings whose motions no eye has been able to follow! And then, what a mere speck must be the little brain in that dainty head; and yet it was capable of

something like thought, perhaps, and of memory of some certain face, and of regard for it. Who knows?

While I was thinking these things the little creature began to stir, and I saw that it was alive. I was instantly seized with a desire to keep it and see what might be done with so small and curious a pet. But how was this to be done? I had nothing smaller than a canary cage, and that would not have held my captive a minute.

I closed up the room and went for a hasty search about the premises. Going as far as the barn in my search, I discovered an old wire horse-muzzle and seized it in triumph. Within a few minutes I had fastened a perch across it and had covered it with a piece of mosquito-netting, and there I had my cage—a somewhat primitive one, it is true, but it

would hold my humming-bird, at least until I had made my experiments with it.

And the little fellow lived, and, under protest, began to occupy his prison house. His emerald feathers dried and shone so brilliantly in the sunlight that I could not admire them enough. He was a ruby-throated humming-bird, and no jewel dug from the mines ever outshone the gleaming ruby that he wore at his throat.

At first his wild flutterings and frantic attempts to escape were painful to see. He beat against the netting just as a man might have beaten against the iron bars of his prison. He could not endure my presence, and yet I was thinking all the time about what I should give him to eat and how I should give it to him.

At last I studied out the plan. I mixed a

little fine white sugar with a small quantity of water and added a drop of syrup. Then I brought in a few morning-glory blooms that were in the shade and had not yet closed, and into each bloom I dropped a bit of the sweet mixture. I fastened the flowers inside the cage, while the poor, wild

little creature went into convulsions of fear, and then went away to a safe distance where I could watch.

To my great delight in a very few mo-

ments the wild fluttering ceased, and the small, graceful creature, hanging poised in mid-air, plunged its long beak into one after another of the flowers, and went over them again and again until it had sipped the very last drop. From that time I knew that the victory was won. I had learned how to feed a humming-bird.

And now I have a very curious thing to tell. Before the end of the first day I had my bird eating. At noon the next day, as I was fastening some flowers in the cage, it began sipping them before I had removed my hands. Two or three hours later I held a spray of honeysuckle bloom in my hand, and it fluttered from one to another and plunged its beak into each. Before night-fall it would sit upon my hand, preening its glistening feathers.

Within two days the shyest, wildest creature that ever flitted through the woods had learned to know me, to welcome the flowers I brought it, and to perch upon my hand with an ease and confidence that most wild birds would have taken years to learn.

For three days I devoted myself to my tiny pet, and even the family considered it a wonderful thing that at the end of that time the little creature would sit on my finger while I walked about the house.

But it was now as well and as strong as ever, and there was no necessity for keeping it a prisoner. The next morning I took it out into the sunshine and held it up, free to go if it liked. It paused for a moment; and then, flying airily about me, hung poised around the flowers that I held out to it. The next instant it darted away toward the

distant forest—so small a speck of beauty and light in such a great wide world.

But the tiny speck had brought me great pleasure, and I was happy to think that its emerald and ruby were flashing through the Mexican forests in the midst of eternal summer while the blasts blew cold around us, and that when spring-time came it would return to its old haunts, and perhaps flit daintily about my honeysuckle vines as of old.

A Little Butcher.

THE STRANGE STORY OF THE TRAGEDIES OF BIRD LIFE.

"WELL, did you ever!" cried Bert, leaning out of the carriage to take a closer survey of the object that had attracted her attention. And when we had all looked at it thoroughly, we replied with one accord:

"No, I never!"

We had stopped and alighted on the grassy bank beside the road, where a barbed wire

fence separated the pasture from the roadway. That is, it had been a barbed wire fence, but now, on every separate barb was impaled a grasshopper. Some of the insects had been there a long time, and were quite dried and shrivelled up, while others were fresh, and two or three were still wriggling their legs convulsively; but in every case the sharp point of the barb was driven quite through the small body of the unfortunate little wayfarer.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Bert, in astonishment, "how did they ever get there?"

"They must have been flying very fast and in great flocks," said Frank, "and the swiftness of their motion impaled them on the wire."

"Maybe they committed suicide," was Ray's suggestion. Ray was always saying something ridiculous.

As for me, I scarcely listened to them. I had a notion of my own about those grasshoppers, and I was eagerly looking around for something that would confirm my opinion. About twenty steps down the road, and close beside the fence, was a hawthorn-bush, and I strolled down toward it. One glance, when I came nearer, was quite enough, and I called out:

"Come here, all of you, and look at this."

They all came running, and surrounded the bush with cries of astonishment. The bush was absolutely filled with dead bodies of various small creatures, which were all impaled on the thorns. Lizards were numerous. There were many field mice, and it was absolutely impossible to count the young birds. Besides, the bush was full of remnants of the larger birds, which had been

torn in pieces and the parts scattered here and there on various thorns.

"Mercy on us! Has everything been committing suicide?" gasped Ray.

"Don't you see?" I cried, breathlessly. "There's a shrike somewhere around—a butcher-bird, you know. That's just the way they do. I read all about it once. I didn't know there were any in this country, though."

And just then Bert, who had been peering into the bush more closely, cried exultingly:

"Here's the nest, Dall! And three eggs in it!"

Sure enough, there it was, away in the centre of the hawthorn-bush. The birds had collected a great mass of material, looking like a ball of coarse grass, leaves, and moss; but there were finer fibres of roots and silky

moss-stems within, and the pretty round cup in the centre was lined with feathers, gathered,

BUTCHER BIRD AND NEST.

perhaps, from the nests of other birds. At least I am sure that none of them came from the breast of the shrike.

What a lovely little home that small bird-butcher had built there! And then, using the thorns as the butcher does his meat-hooks, he had hung up the meat for future use where it would be convenient when he wanted it.

There were four eggs in the nest, and we were sure the birds would not be long away. As we had the evening before us, we sent the carriage on and hid ourselves behind a clump of bushes to await developments.

Before very long there was a flash of wings from out a thicket a little distance away, and here came the butcher with a lizard's long body dangling helpless from his beak. Into the bush he went, and flitted here and there, looking for a thorn to please his fancy, and having found one presently he pulled the

lizard against it until the little limp body was hung there as deftly as any of us could have done it.

Before he had finished his task his mate came in, carrying a pretty little graybird, whose head drooped in a pathetic fashion, and in a minute or two its breast was pierced with a thorn, and it, too, was hung up "for future reference."

"Oh, the cruel little beasts?" cried Bert, with a shudder. "How can pretty birds like those act so shamefully?"

True, they were pretty, and their blue-gray tints, with the darker shadows on wings and tail, their graceful shape and darting motions, made a charming picture, if one had not known what butchery they were making in the little world around them; what devastation they were spreading through the small

universe of which that hawthorn bush was the centre.

During the hour that we watched them, they brought in and hung up on the thorns three lizards, one young bluebird, five grasshoppers, and a turtle-dove. We saw the male shrike kill the dove, darting down upon it and striking the back of its head with so great a force that half the head was torn away, and then the bloodthirsty little murderer tore his victim into pieces, and brought the pieces one by one and hung them up on the thorns.

"Oh, boys, let's go!" cried Bert, turning pale. "I can't stand it any longer."

And so we went on to the farmhouse, but I determined to see more of these strange birds; and I slipped away from the others day after day, and hid behind the neighbor-

ing bushes for hours at a time, watching the two householders. The female began sitting, and after that the male worked harder than ever, bringing in his victims and hanging them up on all the thorns within reach.

And yet, during these days while I watched, on only two or three occasions did I see the birds make any use of the abundant "game" they had stored up around them. They seemed to prefer the fresh food they gathered up every day, and occasionally stopped to eat a lizard or a grasshopper as soon as they caught it.

"Now what is the need of all this destruction?" I kept asking myself, and I puzzled over the problem from day to day.

To tell the truth, I have not solved it satisfactorily yet. The shrike is evidently pro-

viding against times of emergency, and has enough food laid up to carry him comfortably through a famine of several months; but the times of emergency never come, and still the destruction goes on.

When the eggs were hatched, the old birds were kept busy for a while feeding the voracious youngsters, and so they did not add much to their storehouse. And when the little ones were almost ready to fly, there was the thorn-bush still full of the dried carcasses of their small victims, all slain to no purpose.

Bert and the others were very much shocked one day when I carried one of the young birds home and put it into the empty cage.

"You are always making a perfect nuisance of yourself, Dall, with your 'studies' and 'investigations,'" Bert declared with

her usual candor; but I assured her that since I had started out studying shrikes I wanted to know all about them; so I went to work to make a friend of "Sampson," as Ray insisted on naming him.

As the bird overcame its terror and learned to be somewhat familiar with me, I noticed that it would take the lizard or the insect I gave it and would hop about the cage by the hour with the small creature in its beak. I could not understand this restlessness for a while, and I was much disappointed because it ate so little, and always at times when I was not there to see it.

But one day it occurred to me that the bird missed something, and I fastened a wire to the cage with the point projecting within. It was wonderful to see the result. As soon as I gave a lizard to Sampson he seized it

eagerly and lost no time in thrusting it upon the wire. The next and the next followed. When the wire was quite full he was inconsolable for a few moments, until a happy thought suggested itself, and then he pulled all the "game" off the wire, tossed it ignominiously out of the cage, and put his new captures in its place.

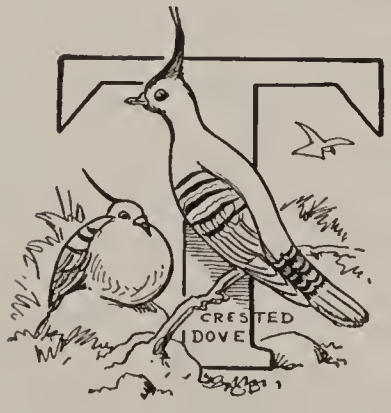
I kept Sampson about three months, and then his stay with us ended in grand tragedy. Some one thoughtlessly left the door of his cage open and he escaped into the room, Bert's canary being in the same room by the sunny window, and before any one had a hint of the dreadful tragedy that was impending, the butcher-bird, true to his name, had pounced upon the merry little singer and absolutely pulled its head off between the bars of its cage.

In the confusion that ensued he escaped, and is perhaps even now filling up the thorns with the small bodies of great multitudes of helpless victims.

So I had found out all about the shrike; but Bert contended that all I knew was not worth the life of the happy little canary that Sampson had so cruelly butchered.

THE PIGEON.

A STORY OF ROMANCE, REALITY, AND DOMESTIC HAPPINESS.



THERE is an old story which tells that the first pigeon was created after all the other birds had been on the earth a long time. They all crowded about the new-comer, and were filled with admiration of her pretty figure and the sheen of the feathers on her neck. None of them were jealous of her beauty, even when she became puffed up with pride and strutted back and

forth before them, turning her head this way and that to show off the shining colors to better advantage. Indeed, they were all eager to help her, because they knew so much more about everything than she did.

"You will want to know how to build a nest," cawed the old rook, "You will want a tall tree for it, and I will show you how to get the twigs to build it with."

"No, thank you; I know how!" replied the pigeon, strutting about with quite a grand air.

"Oh, but I know a better way," cried the water-hen. "Come with me and I'll show you how to make a nest on the water among the reeds, and every wave will rock the nest so delightfully!"

Then the partridge offered to show the new-comer how to build a nest on the ground,

under a tuft of grass, and the eagle was anxious to show her his summer home away up on the mountain-side, and the red-capped woodpecker offered to teach her how to make a nest in a hole in the side of a tree. But to every one of them the pigeon returned the same answer:

"I know how! You needn't mind; I know how!"

At last the friendly birds lost all patience. and they flew away and left the vain little beauty to herself.

After a while the nest-building season came around, and the pigeon must needs go to work and make a little home for herself. But what do you think? She knew nothing about it, after all. When she tried to weave the twigs together they tumbled apart. She had no better success with leaves, or grass,

or mud, though she tried them all. The birds were all gone, disgusted with her vanity. She had no one to consult in her deep distress, so she wandered up and down the earth, wringing her claws and mourning, until man took pity on her and built her a house. And having once started it, he had to keep it up, and men build houses for pigeons to this day. It is easy to see that the story is true, too, for the mourning done by this sorrowful pigeon while she wandered homeless is still heard in the voices of her descendants, whose merriest tones are filled with melancholy.

Across the way, while I write, a group of pigeons are promenading over the roof of a carriage-house, cooing softly, and turning their pretty, graceful heads about, just as this ancestor of theirs did so many centuries

ago. Just below them, in the gable of the house, a hole is cut, and the dove-cote is within. On the little shelf before the door of their abode stands a beautiful bird, its neck glistening in the sunlight with the violet and rose and green of an opal. On the edge of the roof above, another, snowy white, looks down at it and coos in the soft, tremulous undertone, and all at once the whole flock is away, sweeping about in great circles, and catching the sunlight on their wings.

How many dove-cotes one can recall when one comes to think about them, and what pleasant memories they make! Visions come before me of a splendid old Southern farmhouse, with great oak-trees surrounding it, and with wide galleries swept by the south winds. Out in the yard was the

dove-cote mounted on timbers ten feet high.

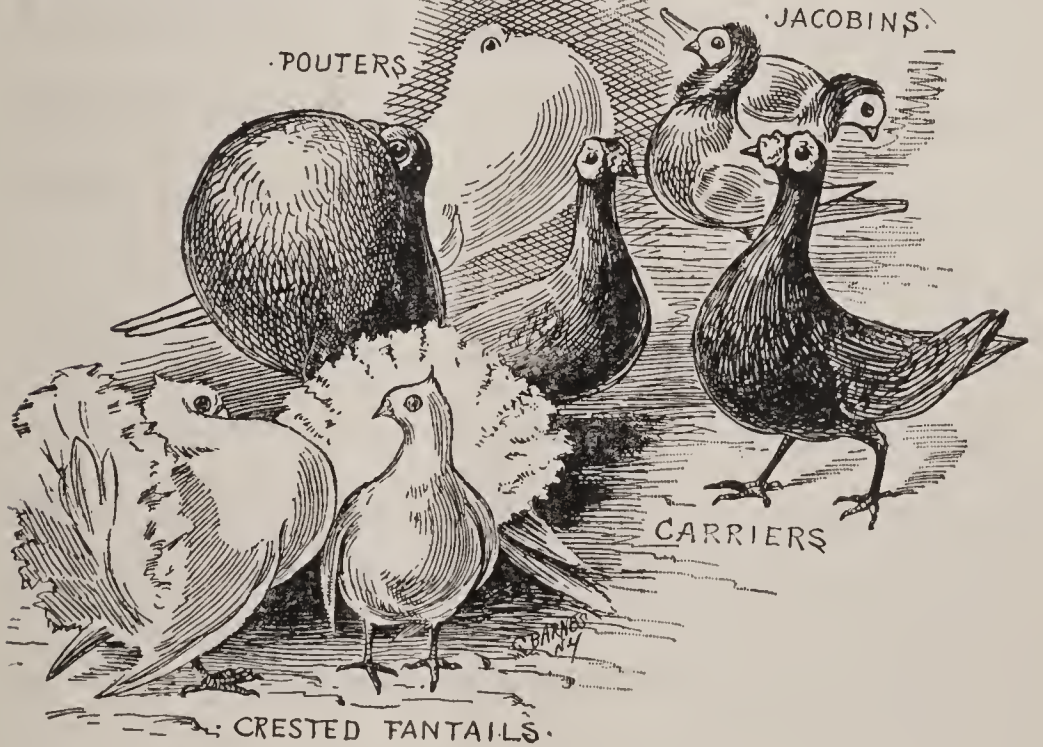
This building intended for the colony of pigeons was almost as large as an ordinary room. A hall ran through the room, and all up and down each side were the little homes of the separate families, each opening into the hall. There were so many of them that I used to wonder how any one of the little householders knew his own home, when they were all alike, and there was not even a number over the door, but I never saw one of them make a mistake. And when I peeped into the little rooms there were the eggs scattered about, only a few straws giving even an indication that an attempt had been made to build a nest—these poor little descendants of the pigeon that knew all about nest-building!

But how pretty they were, and how de-

lightful it was to watch the great flock wheeling and circling about, giving an aspect of beauty and life to the still country landscape. When we fed the fowls, there were the pigeons in the midst of them, darting here and there, and securing so many grains that the inhabitants of the barn-yard were filled with wrath. There was an old goose, especially, that never failed to give the pigeons' feathers an unmerciful tweak, whenever she could get within reach of them, and one day I actually found Numa Pompilius, the big turkey that we were saving for Thanksgiving, strutting about the yard with a pretty white pigeon hanging limp and lifeless from his bill. He had killed the little creature and was showing it off as a trophy.

These pretty farm-yard pigeons, however,

make but one branch of a large family. Every one is familiar with the "tumblers" and the "pouters" and the "fantails" that figure in all the pet stock shows, and that are always surrounded by an eager and



curious crowd of admirers. Then there are the carrier-pigeons, those wonderful little servants of man, which have taken part in the wars that changed the fate of nations. So deep is the love of these little creatures for the small nests that men have made for them that they will make their way back to them over weary miles, and in the face of adverse winds; and advantage has been taken of this home-love to make them carriers of messages. So great a love of home in mere birds! What ought it not to be in human beings, gifted with reason and memory!

But there is another member of the family that haunts the spring forests with melancholy notes of gentle and tender mourning. Away up from the silent woods comes a low "Coo-oo, coo, coo, coo!" and the sound fills

you with vague regrets. You feel as though some great sorrow were upon you, and you try your best to remember what it is. But the notes of sorrow are assumed. The turtle-dove is not mourning at all. She is singing a love-song instead, and her heart is really as light as that of the red-bird whose jubilant whistle sounds sweet and clear from the neighboring hill-top.

When you see the dove herself you are charmed with the quiet beauty of the shy little woodland sprite. Clad all in Quaker gray, the dainty form of the dove makes a deeper impression on you. The graceful neck and sloping shoulders take on softer tints of faint rose-color above the gray, and in the sunlight they brighten into changing opalescent gleams, beautiful to behold.

Yet this woodland dove is a descendant of

that same old-time pigeon that knew all about nest-building. She is sweet and pretty as need be, but she is a shiftless house-maker. Sometimes she builds her nest on the ground with a few twigs and leaves thrown together in the most careless fashion, so that the eggs roll about and have to be "rounded up" and pushed back by the mother bird. Sometimes she builds on some low shrub, but her nest is always a mere apology for a nest—loose, flat, and inartistic.

Shy as the little creatures are, there was one memorable summer when a pair of them built in a sweet-gum tree that shaded our door-yard. They had selected one of the lower limbs, about eight feet from the ground, and there they spread out some twigs, called it a nest, and went to house-

keeping. And such a nest! I have always thought that I could have made a better one myself. I could stand on the ground beneath and see the sky shining through the little platform of twigs.

After a while two eggs of bluish white were in the nest, and it was a matter of surprise to me that the bird could manage to keep them there. Sure enough, one of them did roll over the edge and was crushed on the ground below, but the mother bird went on housekeeping very comfortably with the one remaining egg.

At last the little bird came. As long as it was very small it managed pretty well, except that it fell through the cracks once or twice, and had to be put back; but when it grew large enough to move around a little it kept me busy. Three or four times every

day I had to mount a step-ladder and put the youngster back on its native heath. I kept this up for three weeks, until at last I saw the little fellow topple over the edge again; but instead of falling to the ground he spread his wings and sailed away to a neighboring fence, where his parents received him joyously.

But whenever I saw that turtle-dove's nest, I couldn't help thinking what a pity it was that the first of the family should have been so self-sufficient and vain, when she might so easily have learned something about nest-building.

JUAN.

THE STORY OF A BRIGHT PARROT

UAN was the parrot. When I say the parrot I speak advisedly, for I have been acquainted with a great many parrots, and Juan stands at the head of the list. The mischief he could think of in the course of one day, the "scrapes" he could get into and the remarks he could make, were something wonderful. I have always believed that Juan knew a great deal more than any bird had a right to know.

I must acknowledge that I played a good many pranks on Juan. Being the only young person about the house, at that time, it was natural that I should try to make the time more interesting for the bird and see how many accomplishments I could develop in him.

One day it occurred to me that he had never even peeped into the parlor, as they were all afraid that he would gnaw the furniture or spoil the rugs. There was one of these, an elegant tiger-skin, with lifelike head, outspread claws, and great amber eyes, that I particularly wanted Juan to see. So, when the coast was clear, I opened the door for him, sat down near the tiger-skin, and waited.

There never was any limit to Juan's curiosity, and he immediately came tip-

toeing in, looking the room over, and murmuring, "Bless us!" in an astonished undertone. His circuit took him near the grate, which he first tried to bite into pieces, and which he afterward crowed defiance at. But at last, happening to turn around, he caught a glimpse of the fierce tiger-head, cried, "Mercy me!" and hopped off in alarm. He at once scrambled to the top of a footstool, and from it to a chair that stood near, and looked his enemy over, with horror and alarm showing in every feather. The first thing that occurred to him was that he needed help, and he began screaming with all his might: "Mamma! oh, mamma! Come here, quick!"

But as mamma did not come and the fearful creature on the floor did not move, Juan's valor began to assert itself. Slowly

and carefully he descended from the chair, hand over hand, as one may say, and began circling about the rug, keeping his eyes upon that terrible head, and ready to retreat at a moment's notice. As he marched around and around the rug, his confidence grew with every step. His sidling motion changed to a bold, self-assertive swagger; all at once he paused directly in front of the tiger-head and cried with all his might:

"Scat! scat! you beast!"

And then, as no dreadful consequences ensued from this rash act, Juan decided that he would then and there tear his enemy to pieces. With a cry of "Meouw! Meouw! Scat, you beast!" he flew into the tiger's face and began biting viciously at the great amber eyes.

I had been watching him with so much interest that I had quite forgotten the possible damage he might do, but now I gave the rug a smart jerk, merely to get it away from him. The consequences were wholly unexpected. Juan evidently thought that the huge cat had awakened, and that his hours were numbered. He flew and rolled and scrambled out of the parlor and along the hall, screaming as he went:

"Murder! Oh my! Scat! Mamma! Come here, quick!"

It was some time before I could follow him, for I was down on the tiger-rug laughing until I was too weak to move. When at last I had recovered sufficiently and went to search for Juan, I found him crouched down in a corner of mamma's room; and when I begged him to come

out he murmured in exactly mamma's voice :

"Go away, my dear. My head aches."

From that time on Juan could never be persuaded to go into the parlor or even to go near the door, and when once I tried to carry him by force he bit my hand until I was glad to let him go.

But whether Juan knew it or not, he was amply revenged on me before many days had passed. My mother, who did not believe in children's parties, had granted me as a special favor the privilege of inviting a number of my young friends to my birthday dinner, and I was feeling very proud and very "grown up" in my unaccustomed position as host. After dinner I took my party out to the hall to see Juan and be entertained by him,

carefully explaining to them meanwhile that Juan was the brightest parrot that ever had been seen, and that he caught up everything that was said about the house.

"Make a speech, Juan," I importuned him over and over, but Juan persisted in hanging himself from his perch head downward, and laughing in his most idiotic fashion.

"Ho! I don't believe your old parrot can talk, Jim," said Mart Cooper, who had a parrot that could whistle "Dixie" and could sing "Yankee Doodle." And then, all at once, the mention of my name started Juan off in great style.

"Jim!" he shouted, in an exact imitation of my mother's caressing tones; "Jim! oh, Jimmie! Time to get up, my dear!"

With a sinking heart I realized that

Juan was going through the formula of the daily struggle to get me up in the morning. Getting up in the morning was at that time the bane of my existence, and Juan probably knew it.

"Here, Juan! Good bird!" I said, anxious to distract his attention. "Want a cracker, Juan?"

But Juan was not to be cajoled. With his head on one side, and the slyest of sly expressions, he again called, as at some one away upstairs:

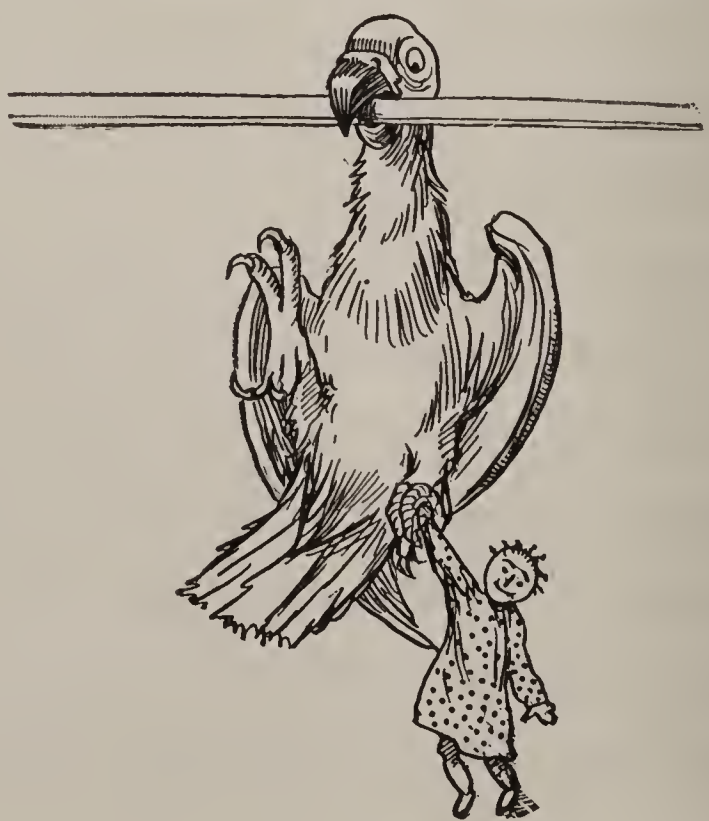
"Jimmie! Oh, Jimmie! Get up, my dear! Your breakfast's getting cold!"

And then, while my face burned with hot blushes, that wretched bird took on the tones of "Aunt Em'line," the cook, and shouted louder than ever:

"You, Mas' Jim! You better histe you'-

self outen dat bed ef you want any breakfast dis blessed day!"

Such a laugh as those young people did raise! I can hear it ringing yet, though that was years ago, and I can feel the mortified tears that came to my eyes. It was a long time before I forgave Juan, but I did forgive him at last, and we were good friends to the day of his death.



RUBE.

A FEW AMUSING EPISODES IN THE LIFE OF A PET FLAMINGO.

"I HAVE brought a little present for the children," is what Uncle Harvey told mother, as he saw her glancing curiously at a tall wicker cage, with a large cloth thrown over the top. We had all been standing around almost bursting with expectancy, for we had caught glimpses of a pair of big, yellow, webbed feet at the bottom of the cage beneath the edge of the cloth.

Uncle Harvey had just come home from

a three years' stay in Key West. We had the most romantic ideas of that unknown country. There was no telling what he might not have brought. We had already been building up strange and fantastic animals on those big webbed feet, and when Uncle Harvey called us all around him, and prepared to lift the cloth, we were ready for almost anything that might occur.

"All ready, now! Off she comes!" cried Uncle Harvey, who was a good deal of a boy himself, and he drew off the cloth with a flourish.

The flash of scarlet in the cage almost made us start away, but with cries of wonder and delight we greeted the flamingo, the first we had ever seen, though our natural history had made us familiar with its picture. Tall as its cage was, the brilliant

bird had to stoop a little to dispose of himself within its limits.

In the midst of our commiseration for its condition, Uncle Harvey took the cage out to the lawn, tore the top off, and set the prisoner free. With what relief did he stretch up his long neck and raise his scarlet head, with its long, curved beak! We were quite sure that no such beautiful creature had ever been seen on any lawn, and we were immediately glad to think that our playmate, Ben Doeing, had nothing but a deer on his lawn. True, we had always admired the deer very much, but what was a deer compared with this!

"Now, children," said Uncle Harvey, with a merry twinkle in his eyes, "of course you will never forget for a moment that the flamingo's name is Phœnicopterus Ruber."

"All right, we'll call him Rube, for short," cried my brother Tom, who hated science, and never could see why families of birds should have Latin names.

"And the flamingoes breed in the islands down about Key West," Uncle Harvey continued, good humoredly. "They walk out in the shallow water, rake up a pile of mud about three feet high, hollow out a place in the top, and lay their eggs there. That is all, except that the young ones are white until they are two years old. Feed this fellow on rice and boiled corn, children, and give him a run down to the pond occasionally, to look for minnows and tadpoles."

And that was how Rube became a member of our family. We were so proud of the brilliant show he made and of the attention he attracted that he rose high in our

favor. When he was on the lawn, people turned, and looked, and looked again at the brilliant hues of this tropic creature, which had wandered so far from home.

As for the children, I am afraid to think how many of them must have been tardy, and how many may have been punished for playing truant, but it seemed impossible for them to get past our lawn, and they spent hours on the sidewalk every evening, with their faces glued to the fence, peeping through at Rube and trying to cultivate an acquaintance.

But Rube permitted no familiarities on the part of strangers. He always ignored any advances from the outside, and followed us around all day, occasionally uttering a peculiar cry that sounded more like the creaking of a swing than anything else.

He allowed us to fondle him, to caress his long neck, to smooth his feathers; and when we tied gay knots of yellow ribbon about his neck and legs, making him a crimson and gold Eight O'Clock Club bird, he only curved his long neck down and looked at himself with some astonishment, making no effort to rid himself of his gay adornings.

There were three of us children, and people said that Rube made four, for we finally became almost inseparable. During the warm weather, while the windows were stretched open day and night, Rube stood on the ground outside and solaced himself by stretching his long neck through the window and rubbing his beak against us.

This happened first, one morning before daylight, and it startled me so that I sprang

out of bed and rushed across the room with a wild shriek, for I thought it was some enormous snake ; but the next minute I saw the gleam of the moonlight on Rube's scarlet feathers, and begged the boys not to tell anybody how I had been frightened. But we had to pull the bed away to the other side of the room, out of reach, and then Rube could only look at us and utter that strange, creaking cry of his.

I am quite certain that Rube knew a great deal more than he pretended. He went about after us or stood around the lawn, appearing to be deeply engaged in thinking, with his hands under his coat-tails. He had such a dignified air that I used to think he needed nothing in the world but a pair of spectacles to complete the picture. Indeed, I tried to make him a pair out of

grandma's old ones, but he positively declined to wear them. He had submitted to everything else that we had tried on him without a murmur. He had stood still while we tied ribbons all over him, and had once worn a baby dress that we borrowed for the occasion, and appeared quite proud of it, too, stalking around solemnly in full view of a mob of school-children, who were shouting and shrieking with delight outside the fence.

But it seemed that Rube drew the line at spectacles, and he twisted his head and kicked with such energy that I had to give up the idea of putting them on him. And yet, sober and thoughtful as Rube looked, I am satisfied that funny things occurred to him, and there is little doubt that he sometimes chuckled to himself. One day a

friend was visiting our house, and she brought with her a little one-year-old baby. who had just learned to stand alone. I took the little one out to the lawn,

knowing that it would be pleased with Rube, whose brilliant color attracted all children, and I stood the child in the grass not far from him.

It was evidently the first baby that Rube had ever seen. With a croak of astonishment he stretched up his head and skipped off a few steps, looking back over his shoulder, as it were. But in a few moments he turned and went slowly back, gaining confidence as he went. Soon he stood beside the baby, his body towering above it, and from that superior height he dropped the head at the end of that long and sinuous neck, and looked the baby over from head to foot with an appearance of the liveliest curiosity.

And then, while I was wondering what he would do next, he stretched himself up, raised one long awkward leg, and deliberately stepped over the baby!

The baby's loud screams joined with our shrieks of laughter brought the whole

family out, but when they reached the scene of the disturbance Rube was standing by in his usual thoughtful attitude, with one leg slightly raised, and his neck curved in those numerous festoons that always made one think nature had made a mistake and given him at least a foot of neck more than he needed.

I was sitting on one of the lawn seats one day idly watching Rube, who was stalking leisurely about, when I saw him play the most villainous prank that a bird ever played on any human being. Old Steve Ryan, who had been for many years the town drunkard, and whose efforts to reform had always ended in the gutter, was staggering along the sidewalk outside.

We had all been taught to pity Steve as the wreck of a bright man, and I am sure

mother would have been dreadfully shocked if we had dared to laugh at him. When he had stumbled and staggered along past our gate he paused and leaned against the fence as though he were going to sleep there. Rube croaked once or twice in a kind of undertone, as of one that communes with himself, and then he went stepping gingerly across the grass in the direction of the figure leaning against the fence.

I was all attention in a minute, for didn't I know that something funny had suggested itself to that bird? Steve had his back toward us. Was Rube going to bite the buttons off the back of his coat or jerk off his hat? Neither. The tall, scarlet figure went deliberately down till it almost touched the fence, and then, all at once, it twisted its long neck around the shambling shoul-

ders, brought its head opposite to Ryan's face, and gave his nose a vicious bite.

Poor Steve gave one terrified glance at the long scarlet neck and snake-like head of his assailant, and then fled down the street with such howls as never had been heard in that quiet town. I am afraid to conjecture what he may have thought of Rube, but I know that the adventure sobered him, and what is more, he remained sober, and when he died, two months later, was a steady and respectable man.

Rube came stepping back up the slope with his usual thoughtful air. There was not the ruffling of a feather to betray that he knew he had played a tremendous joke.

Rube had been with us about a year when he took his station in the conservatory, overshadowed by palms and ferns and broad-

leafed banana-plants. It was not Rube at all; only a mere stuffed resemblance of him; but we loved even that, and never passed it without stroking the soft scarlet feathers.

FLAMINGO ASLEEP ON HER NEST

ZENO.

SOME OF THE FUNNY CAPERS OF A VERY FUNNY PET CROW.

AMONG all the tribe of pets, I have never seen one that compared in originality and quaintness with a certain crow that was a member of an old North Carolina family for more years than any one cared to remember. A merry trio of children grew up with him, and made a pet and plaything of him until they were old enough to lay playthings aside; and when they

had children of their own, this new generation rolled and tumbled with him about the lawn, or went hunting or walking with him promenading along at their heels.

Zeno was on good terms with all the family, but he made no secret of his preference for the young people, and if any of the children wanted to go on any expedition and leave him behind he generally had to be locked up in the closet. Poor Zeno! How he did cry and shriek "Murder!" on such occasions, until his captors were glad enough to open the door and let him go.

The family had always been very anxious for Zeno to learn to talk, and they spent a great deal of time in repeating expressions that they wished to teach him. He did, indeed, learn to say a good many things, but I am sorry to say that none of them were

the things they had tried to teach him. He listened, indeed, with his head on one side and the air of a critic, while Lucille sang to him, or Bob whistled, or Howard talked, but in the first pause he remarked with an air of jocose surprise: "Bless us and save us!" And the strangest part of it was that no one knew where he had learned that.

He was very quick, however, in picking up expressions that tickled his fancy. One day while Bob was dressing in a great hurry, his collar-button fell and rolled away under the bureau, as such things will, and Bob exclaimed impatiently, "Hang that button!" After that, whenever anything disturbed Zeno, he exclaimed, "Hang that button!" as glibly as though he had been trained on it from his youth up.

Not long afterward he was poking curi-

ously about a bonfire in the yard, where one of the servants was burning some trash, and he stepped upon a coal. Away he went back to the house, shrieking, cawing, and ejaculating, "Hang that button! Oh, hang that button!" until he found the mother of the family, to whom he always went for comfort in his afflictions.

There never was anything to equal Zeno's curiosity. The presence of any new thing about the premises drove him wild, until he could properly investigate it and satisfy himself about it. When a baby was born in the family, some one had to stand guard over it and introduce Zeno to it gradually. He perched up on the side of the cradle, peered curiously at the little head and face, turned the tiny little feet over with his inquisitive bill, and exclaimed in an awe-struck

undertone, "Bless us and save us!" A moment afterward the baby waked and began to cry, when Zeno flew to the back of a chair in great alarm, and sat there screaming, "Hang that button!" until the crying had ceased. I have no doubt that he thought he was helping the baby express itself under trying circumstances.

One day, while the workmen were making a hot-bed in the garden, Zeno stood around, looking very much like a reflective old gen-

tleman with his hands under his coat-tails, and attended to every detail of the whole affair. Whenever a spadeful of earth was turned up he examined it carefully, with his head to one side, and then he looked anxiously into the hole from which it had been taken, and made remarks to himself in a low tone.

He superintended the business until it was finished and the workmen had packed up their tools and gone away, and then he went quietly to work taking the hot-bed to pieces. He had torn one end out and was busily engaged with a sash when he was discovered, and I am afraid that he never understood why he was shut up in the wood-house all through one long, lonely day.

A merry, humorous little soul was Zeno. He never laughed aloud, but one could al-

most fancy that, like Tennyson's miller, he had a

> "Slow, wise smile, that round about
> His dusty forehead drily curled."

All day long, when he was not playing off an old joke on some unsuspecting victim, he was studying up a new one, and no doubt was chuckling to himself. He would walk about the yard with that thoughtful look, and his hands under his coat-tails, until old Jep, the Newfoundland, would feel convinced that he had no evil designs, and would drop peacefully off to sleep. Then Zeno would approach on tip-toe and bite Jep's nose until he howled, after which he stood on the fence and looked away down the road until the storm had subsided.

He would follow the little negroes about for hours at a time, merely for a chance to

catch them at some unguarded moment and tweak their bare legs unmercifully. The old black mammy hated him with all her heart, and was always watching for him, but her comfortable fat ankles were seldom without some mark of his attentions.

When "Miss Sallie" laid down her sewing for a minute, and left the room, she was sure to find scissors or thimble gone when she returned, and if she was very quick in pursuit she captured Zeno in the act of carrying the missing article to some safe hiding-place where he was making a storehouse. Sometimes she carefully hid the thimble under the folds of her work, and then Zeno would lift the garment with his bill, and peer about until he found what he wanted.

When too many things were missing a private detective would be employed to

watch Zeno, and if the detective was very shrewd, he would generally find a hole under the steps, or in the corner of the chimney, or down by the garden-wall, from which thimbles, slate-pencils, hair-pins, buttons, baby's stockings, nails, articles of jewelry, anything and everything would be unearthed.

One of Zeno's chief pleasures was to stand around the blacksmith-shop and watch Chris, the negro blacksmith, about his work. Every motion that Chris made was watched as eagerly as though Zeno intended to begin blacksmithing himself, and every nail that he dropped was pounced upon and carried off. Chris had been warning Zeno for some time that "dis yer hatter be stopped," and at last, during Zeno's temporary absence, he heated a nail until it was at least uncomfortably warm, and when Zeno came back with

that funny little mincing walk of his, the nail was innocently dropped down before him. He seized it, dropped it, and went flying and running to "Miss Sallie," screaming:

"Oh, murder! Bless us and save us! Hang that button!"

Miss Sallie took him in her arms and soothed him, as well as she could for laughing, but Zeno could never be persuaded to touch a nail again.

DAY IN CAMP.

MY VISIT TO THE CAMP.

HEN they proposed to take me with them on their camping expedition I listened a little dubiously. I was just recovering from a long struggle with fever, and was still so weak that I could scarcely walk. I improved so slowly as to give my brother great uneasiness, and he determined to take me on a fishing and hunting expedition with himself and a party of friends to a lake about twenty miles away.

"You'll be left alone in camp a good deal, Dallas," he said, "because, of course, the boys will want me to go with them; but I think the woods and the fresh air'll do you good, anyway."

So I promised to go, though I took no great interest in it. Even when the morning for departure came, and I was roused before day and carried like a baby to the light wagon, I felt a little tired of the whole affair.

A comfortable bed had been made in the wagon, and the boys were as merry as larks. It was a jolly outing for all of them, and they enjoyed every foot of the way. My brother, whose name is Leslie, was careful of my comfort, and was evidently filled with the idea that the trip was going to do wonders for me.

But at last, after what seemed ages of jolting up one hill and down another, we went down into darker and heavier growth, and through the front of the covered wagon I caught glimpses of great oak trees with all their branches draped with Spanish moss. We were near the banks of the lake.

The point they selected was at the foot of a high hill, covered with oak, hickory, and elm to the summit. All about our camping-place were magnolia trees, with a sprinkling of holly and beach, and farther away, toward the lake front, giant cypresses reared their huge ridged trunks and sent up their thin crest of fringe-like foliage.

Only a few steps away a spring burst out at the foot of the hill from among a

mass of rocks and went trailing away lakeward, its course marked by laurels and ferns. I was very tired, but as soon as I looked around I was glad I had come.

The boys were all in a fever of excitement, and as soon as the tent was stretched and a hammock swung between two of the magnolias, they snatched up guns and fishing tackle, and rushed off to the lake.

I lay in my hammock, swinging leisurely. Up on the hillside I heard the chatter of a squirrel, and in a few minutes it came darting down the hillside and ran up one of the great magnolias, not twenty feet away. Off to the right, among the underbrush, a shy bird, of which I could not catch a glimpse, was singing a few notes over and over again, the softest, most melancholy cry I had ever heard. I fan-

cied that it said "San José Maria!" and though it was only a swamp vireo, I have never been able to hear its cry without associating it with that romantic Spanish name.

Suddenly, away among the trees, sounded a loud, clear whistle that I knew, and the next minute, parting the leaves with his flash of flame, came the red bird, the brilliant cardinal grosbeak.

"What cheer! What cheer!" he called, merrily swinging, poised upon the limb of a tree near by, proud of his jaunty black cap and brilliant suit, and he dropped down to the spring and drank, and then, catching a glimpse of me, was off again.

I watched his swift, curving flight, and turned for some new object to study. A big dark creature came through the woods

in such a sudden and noiseless fashion that it startled me, and I half sprung up, but the next moment I saw that it was an owl. The boys down on the lake had doubtless frightened it from its slumbers and sent it winging its way through the forest. A little later, when the shadows of evening began to fall, it seemed as if the woods were full of them. They hooted and screamed and laughed until I could scarcely convince myself that they were not fiends instead of birds.

And early morning in those woods! I shall never forget it. I had seen all those things many times before, for we had had many camping parties, but lying there almost helpless in my hammock, everything came to me with a new and tranquil delight. The squirrel came down on

one of the lower limbs of a magnolia and peeped over at me impudently, whisking his tail about, and finally he sat up and performed his toilet with great care, rubbing his face briskly with his hands, and then wiping it carefully with his tail.

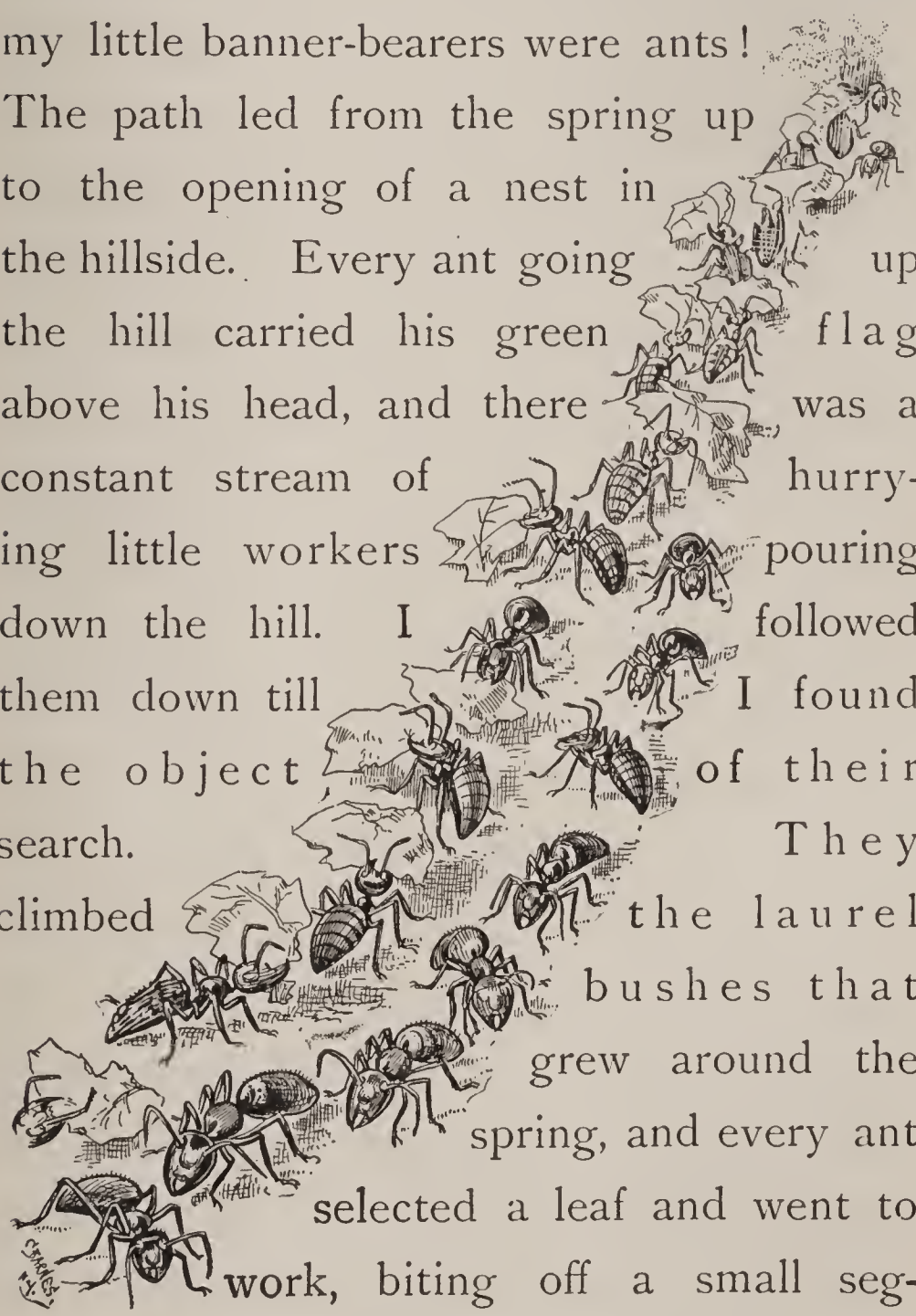
I found soon afterward that there was a hollow in the tree above and he had his nest in it. Some sudden noise sent him skurrying up the tree, and he whisked into the hole and was out of sight; but the very next moment there was his inquisitive nose peeping out, and his sharp eyes on the alert for the hidden enemy.

A little later in the day I made a curious discovery. The ground about the spring was thickly covered with the matted grass known as "carpet grass," which allows not an inch of the ground to be seen,

and which has short, strong blades and fills the soil to the depth of several inches with a tangle of fibrous roots. Yet along down the slope ran a tiny path about two inches wide and utterly bare of any vegetation. Not a spear of grass grew in it from one end to the other. It was as smooth and hard as any cement walk that ever adorned a door-yard. The path was not straight, but wound along through the grass in a multitude of curves, just as a cow trail winds its way through the forest.

And up that path came a mighty army with banners! Everywhere, as far as I could see, tiny banners of green were moving steadily from the spring up toward the hill. The sight filled me with such astonishment that I tumbled out of my hammock and went eagerly to investigate.

Judge of my surprise when I found that my little banner-bearers were ants! The path led from the spring up to the opening of a nest in the hillside. Every ant going up the hill carried his green flag above his head, and there was a constant stream of hurrying little workers pouring down the hill. I followed them down till I found the object of their search. They climbed the laurel bushes that grew around the spring, and every ant selected a leaf and went to work, biting off a small seg-



ment, generally about half an inch across. Sometimes the little toiler secured his leaf and crawled down the bush with it, but much oftener leaf and ant went tumbling to the ground together. No matter. The little soldier hurriedly gathered himself up, searched around till he found his flag, and taking the edge of it in his nippers, held it above his head, bannerwise, and went marching away valiantly enough.

All along its length the little path was a moving mass of these small green banners. The ants that came posting down the path never interfered with the opposite stream, nor had the slightest unpleasant feeling. Once, when one of the little flags became entangled in some overhanging blades of grass, it was seized by three or four of the ants that were empty-

handed, if I may use the expression, and they gave it such a violent pull that it came with a jerk, landing the enthusiastic helpers on their backs with their legs in the air. But in a moment they were all up and away, and the rescued banner was waving far up the path.

There was a pleasant scene at the mouth of the nest. The hole was a very small one, and many of the flags were too large to be carried in readily. But what an army of workmen there was, always ready for just such an emergency! Whenever a square of green proved obstinate it was seized by half-a-dozen willing hands, and the way it went rushing out of sight was astonishing.

How I wished that I could look down

those long galleries and through the halls and corridors! I would have given a great deal to know whether those leaves were piled up in the bed-rooms and made into winter couches for the baby ants, or were stored in silos for winter food; but not even to know that would I have turned the habitation wrong side out, and sent the brave and patient little colony adrift.

We were three days in those autumn woods. When we reached home, Leslie said:

"Mother, what do you think! Dallas never went fishing once! He stayed at the camp the whole time, mooning around after birds and ants and things! And he didn't want to come home! But he's ever so much better!"

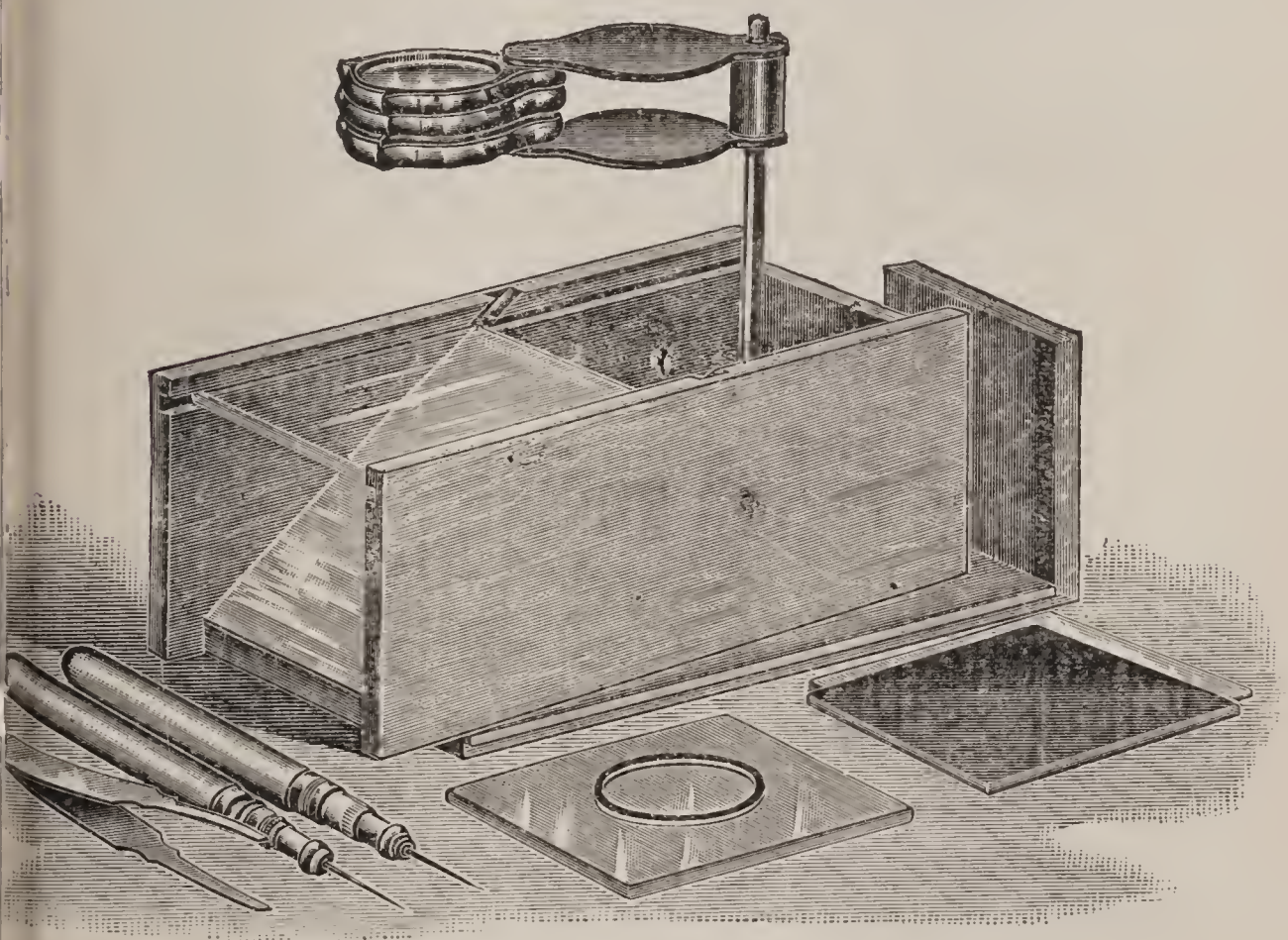
And the little mother looked at me and said:

"I'm very glad!"

EXTRA EYES

HAVE you ever seen the beautiful colors in a fly's wing, or the hole through a hair, or the little seed babies in the different seeds? Probably not unless you have some extra eyes to see them with. We call these EXTRA EYES, MICROSCOPES. Microscope is a name made from two Greek words, MICROS, "small," and SKOPEIN, "to view," and is an instrument to look at small things.

A very nice one is shown in the following picture:



it has glass plates to put these small things on, a mirror to reflect the light under them, and all of the little instruments necessary. The price is $2.00, and this covers the entire cost of a nice strong box with a place for each part, which will be sent to any address for this price.

William Beverley Harison, 3 and 5 West 18th St., N. Y. City.

Old Mother Earth

Her Highways and By-ways:

BY

JOSEPHINE SIMPSON

Price, 36 Cents, Post-paid

Old Mother Earth is full of wonders about which few of us know a very little. A great many of these interesting things are described in this little book.
It tells about:

Toilers of the Sea.—The Fire Gnome.—Prince Volcan.—Old Dunderhead.—Sputter Top.—Little and Big.—An Endless Spin.—A Thick Veil.—Madame Heavy Weight.—A Good Riddance.—Master Vapor's Blanket.—The Wind Causeway.—A Clean Sweep.—Heavenly Tempers.—Scattered Pearls.—Angel Feathers.—Color Bearers.—Trapped Sunbeams.—Wee Plow-Men.—Silver Threads.—A Pinch of Salt.—And a great many other interesting things.

WILLIAM BEVERLEY HARISON

3 and 5 West 18th Street, New York City